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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JOHN MAHON — AFTER THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

B. R. MANN — VULCANS OVER THE AFRICAN VOLCANO

H. BOURNE — THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

KARL SACHER — HOW DID MAN ORIGINATE?

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Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

THERE has recently been in the scientific press considerable discussion about the problem of providing an adequate supply of food for all the inhabitants of our community, both now and in the future. Echoes of this discussion have penetrated the daily press, broadcasting and television, and also popular scientific journals like *The New Scientist*. The British Association has just held a widely reported symposium on the subject at which several distinguished scientists gave their views.

There can be no doubt that the sudden interest in this question is the direct result of the enormous advance of the national liberation movement in the colonial, semi-colonial and former colonial countries. The fact that millions of people are under-fed has now been forced on the attention of the world. It is also a fact that, at present, world population is increasing more rapidly than in the past, partly as a result of advances in medical science. Since the increase in population embraces the millions of colonial peoples, either fighting for, or emerging into, independence, as well as the third of the world already socialist, it is perhaps not surprising that a few frightened supporters of imperialism have fallen into despairing and melancholy Malthusian moans and are calling for militant birth control as the sole solution to what they term the threatening "population explosion".

In view of this shallow nonsense a serious scientific discussion of the problem of food supply can only be welcomed. It may be said at once that, even at the present level of knowledge in techniques, there is no insoluble technical problem whatsoever in adequately feeding a very much larger world population than exists today. This is the practically unanimous opinion of the experts which emerges from their deliberations. The problem of an adequate world food supply has *already* been solved at the technical and scientific level, and the technical questions, though of great interest, are *not* the decisive ones. The real problem of feeding the world is now a question of politics, but from this side of the problem most of the experts shy away as if it were dynamite, which indeed it is.

It is true that a few scientists have referred to the type of problems which hinder the full development of world agricultural resources, but hardly any of them have dared to call this problem-child by its real name—imperialism. In a letter to *The Times* the doyen of agricultural scientists, Sir John Russell, has given a very penetrating analysis of the social changes that are required, referring especially to the necessary connection between industrial development and the building of large-scale mechanised scientific agriculture. But even he does not venture to say straight out that such development is impossible under imperialism and only becomes possible in countries which have made a clean break away from imperialist domination, whilst the final solution of the problem of agricultural production can be achieved only in a fully socialist society.

One cannot fail to be struck by the way in which honest and well-meaning people can be blinkered by imperialist ideas of which they themselves are scarcely conscious. Most of the discussion on population and food has been stultified by this blindness, so that it becomes a mere threshing around amidst minor technical questions, whilst the root political question—the ending of imperialist exploitation and the building of socialist society—is evaded. All this emphasises the need for more systematic and sustained instruction by Marxists of the nature of imperialism, so that people come to appreciate how imperialism corrupts not only economically and morally but, more subtly, intellectually.

Incidentally, a very interesting example of the extraordinary penetration of imperialist ideas was provided at the recent Rehovoth Conference in Israel on Science in the newly independent states of Asia and Africa. Scientists from the advanced capitalist countries (including Professor Blackett) solemnly adjured the new states to concentrate on applied science and leave fundamental research to countries with established scientific traditions. In other words, leave it to Big Imperialist Brother! And the Fabians and New Thinkers tell us that "imperialism is finished".

The Underdeveloped Regions

In this connection it is very interesting to note how much the so-called "underdeveloped countries" and the problems involved in their development from backward colonial (or semi-colonial) areas into economically independent nations are pushing their way into the news.

This gives special interest to a Conference held in Naples towards the end of last September on the Economic Problems of Underdeveloped Regions (Convegno di Studio su Esperienze e Problemi di Sviluppo delle Regioni Arretrate), which was convened by the Economic Research Department of the Feltrinelli Institute of Milan and attended by economists from the socialist countries (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.) as well as French and Italian (and one English) economists.

Its composition, as well as the content of the wide

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variety of papers and discussion-statements, made it a unique occasion: an occasion which will, one hopes, be a precursor of others like it. The Italian contributions were naturally enough focused upon the question of Southern Italy, which is an underdeveloped region relatively to the rest of Italy (as readers of Carlo Levi and Danilo Dolci will recognise). Here there has already been *some* development under state influence, and there are official government plans for future developments which came under heavy criticism at the Conference for their inadequacy, or for the obstacles confronting their practical implementation in a capitalist or even semi-feudal environment. Very noteworthy was the positive attitude taken in the discussions by leading Italian Communists with special knowledge of Italy's backward areas, who, not content just with criticism of existing policies, put forward constructive proposals of their own for improving existing plans and, in particular, for more effective implementation at the local level, by land reform and changes in the backward social structure. They also strongly suggested the participation of the trade unions in the carrying out of such measures, combating the influence of the monopolists, etc.

At the present time, when the attitude of the working class to state capitalism is so important a political question in many capitalist countries, the lessons of such a Conference as this are well deserving of study by Marxists. Britain is not Italy; but, quite apart from those countries which are still colonial and those which have recently won their political independence, whose backwardness is the direct responsibility of British imperialism, is it not true to say that there are still economically backward regions inside the British Isles themselves which urgently demand attention?

Need for a National Opera

Recently, the General Administrator of Covent Garden set out some of the problems involved in the establishment of a national opera in Britain. His points are valid—so far as they go.

Conductors and principal singers are no longer satisfied to settle into the Opera House, as they were when Mahler reigned in Vienna. The world has shrunk, and successive performances in a series of capitals are not only possible, but highly remunerative. If chorus and orchestra are tied to their place of employment, the leading figures insist on their right to fly round the world, gathering princely fees at every stop. Radio and recording increase the instability and the glittering process.

Covent Garden has done its limited best to encourage native talent, although the limitations need severe investigation. But the real limitations are far wider, and upon these Sir David Webster is silent.

Britain is the only country in the world, laying claim to musical culture, which has two Opera Houses in its capital city—*and not one outside it*. We have been brought up to believe that Germans, Italians and Russians are "innately" musical, while we are not. The truth is that these nations have organised their music, whilst we have not. In these countries *every* self-respecting city has its opera house. Native composers of talent can hear their works performed, and benefit profoundly from the experience. Native conductors can develop their art in their home town, without having to rush to the capital and join the great competitive struggle for jobs and openings. Choruses and orchestras abound and no talent is wasted.

In our operatic desert the meagre oasis of London leads most of our talent to it. We must not wait for socialism to cure Britain's lamentable situation. The battle starts now; and the T.U.C. might well look in this direction.

The Pilkington Committee

Following the publication in May of this year of the report of the Government's Television Advisory Committee, which cleared the air by going carefully into the technical details for the future development of TV in Britain, the government announced in September the names of the twelve members of the Committee to serve with Sir Harry Pilkington in investigating the future of radio and TV broadcasting. As TV and radio are the most potent forms of formulating public opinion, not only in disseminating information, but also in education and the field of culture in its widest sense, the Committee's terms of reference need to be understood by the whole of the progressive movement. They are:

> "To consider the future of the broadcasting services in the United Kingdom, the dissemination by wire of broadcasting and other programmes, and the possibility of television for public showing; to advise on the services which should in future be provided in the United Kingdom by the B.B.C. and I.T.A.: to recommend whether additional services should be provided by any other organisation; and to propose what financial and other conditions should apply to the conduct of these services."

Questions of such a threatening character as the desirability of a third TV Channel, and who is to run it, all seem to come within the terms of reference of the Pilkington Committee. The Committee on Broadcasting, which is its official designation, is ready to hear the views of any interested person or organisation, so long as they register their desire to do this in writing by the end of November.

The work of this Committee raises most funda-

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mental problems. It is common knowledge now how great is the power in the hands of the men controlling radio and TV to influence people's minds. The most essential problem is whether the future organisation will mean that this immense power for good or ill is fixed more firmly in the hands of monopoly capitalism and its state or whether some greater influence passes into the hands of the mass of the people. This is the essential question which Sir Harry Pilkington's colleagues will really be asked to decide, and as the Chairman of Associated Rediffusion, John Spencer Wills, told his Company's annual general meeting, with typical British reserve —"although the terms of reference are brief, the task of the Committee is almost certain to be long and arduous". Let us hope that it should indeed be long and arduous through the popular pressure of progressive individuals and organisations of every type putting their suggestions before this Committee, and making a public campaign for their acceptance.

Ballyhoo

Increasingly over the past few years, the film publicist has been given greater scope and greater financial allocations. Newspaper advertisements, posters, press handouts, cinema trailers and other traditional methods were not enough. In common with general thinking in advertising, the attempt had to be made to saturate the public's whole environment with publicity—subtle or brash—in order to influence them.

Alec Guinness in *Our Man from Havana* was, incidentally, a vacuum-cleaner salesman, so a joint campaign was launched between the film company and Hoovers, no doubt to the mutual benefit of each. Disc jockeys on radio and TV can often be enlisted to help with a mention of the film from which the record they are playing comes; looking back a few years, who can now assert which made the greater impact—the film or the song of *Three Coins in the Fountain*?

None of these methods is particularly new, though the amount of time and money devoted to them is a feature of recent development. Television, once regarded as the "enemy" of the cinema, has given cinemas and film renters a new medium for publicity and advertising. TV programmes about current films that give extracts from those films help to create interest in the cinema and film personalities. The argument is heard in the film trade that these snips from new pictures help to undo the harm often caused by the showing on TV of old films, many of them second rate, which have been sold to television much to the disgust of the cinemas.

But in addition to the extracts which may be seen on either B.B.C. or I.T.V., an increasing number of renters and cinemas are advertising their wares by means of TV commercials. First in the field on a regular basis was Associated British Cinemas, with specially made commercials about current releases at ABC Theatres, and these have been shown almost exclusively on ABC Television. The Rank Organisation followed with regular weekly commercials, which included tantalising extracts from current cinema offerings at their halls; these commercials were concentrated on Southern Television, in which there are Rank interests, though some have been seen in the London area.

For all intents and purposes these commercials for cinema films have now become part of the general pattern of film publicity, and they represent one further example of the coming together of the two major sections of the entertainment industry.

However, a further permutation has been the use of television as the spearhead of saturation-selling techniques for some quite mediocre films (and this is a very generous description). These pictures, produced in Italy and with most of the voices dubbed into English of a sort, have been picked up comparatively cheaply by British and American renters and vast sums (sometimes higher than the cost of the film) spent on publicity. *Hercules Unchained* and *Hannibal* are examples of the kind of recent cinema offering publicised in this way.

It is ironical that so many of these films advertised with such bombastic ballyhoo deal with revenge and vengeance—facts that are stressed in the publicity. There is some reason to think that the public, bamboozled by the ballyhoo of advertising, will learn how to express their revenge and their vengeance, even if not so savagely as depicted in *Goliath and the Barbarians* or the forthcoming Italo-French co-production *Queen of the Tartars*. There are plenty more such films in production, so the public will have opportunities for expressing its views.

Science and Materialism

As Engels long ago pointed out, one of the strongest proofs of materialism is the way science continually brings into the aspect of its investigation and control new regions of experience.

A particularly striking example of this from the field of mental diseases seems worthy of mention.

In recent years an increasing number of cases of mental defect have been found to be associated with bio-chemical defects, that is, with abnormal functioning of one or other of the chemical processes going on in the body. The exciting thing about the latest work is that it has been possible to cure (or at least enormously improve) one type of mental defect by treating the biochemical defect.

The particular disease concerned is an hereditary condition known as phenylketonuria. Children born with this defect become mental defectives. Such

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children are unable to utilise the amino acid, phenylalanine, in the normal manner, since an essential enzyme concerned with its metabolism is either lacking or, more probably, is present in very low amounts. Now phenylalanine is a normal constituent of most protein foods and is used by the body to build up its own proteins. The child with phenylketonuria can use phenylalanine to build its body proteins, but it cannot get rid of excess amounts as the normal child can. Hence the amount of phenylalanine in its blood rises to an abnormal level and its degradation product, phenylpyruvic acid, is excreted in large amounts in the urine. This high concentration of phenylalanine in the blood stream makes the child mentally defective.

Now this particular abnormal defect can be detected almost at birth by seeing whether there is excess phenylpyruvic acid in the urine. If such children, right from birth, are then fed a special diet very low in phenylalanine, the excess phenylalanine in the blood can be prevented. They develop practically normally and do not become mentally defective.

This work gives great hope for the treatment of other types of mental defect. It is particularly interesting as an example of the control of mental phenomena at the level of body chemistry.

Learning Russian

It is not generally realised how rapidly the study of Russian is growing in Britain. Up to two years ago, outside the university, only a handful of schools and evening institutes ran Russian classes.

But with the advance of Soviet science, and especially since the first Sputnik was launched, there has been a constant increase in the number of people, of all political opinions, who have started to learn Russian, which they realise to be a language of the future.

In fact the latest issue of the Bulletin of the Association of Teachers of Russian lists over 270 schools and institutions where the language was being taught last year, and with the new school year there will be many more.

But the biggest body of students of Russian comprises those following the B.B.C. Network III Course. The B.B.C. reckons that at least 40,000 have kept up the lessons all through the year. This figure compares very favourably with those for the French, German and Spanish courses. From October the first course will be repeated and a second course instituted. The number of listeners to the Moscow Radio lessons is also steadily increasing.

One difficulty has been the small number of well-qualified teachers and up-to-date textbooks: Russian has undergone many changes since the Revolution. It is therefore much to be welcomed that publishing houses in the Soviet Union are now providing many textbooks, dictionaries, readers and gramophone records to help the non-Russian student. These are based on the same excellent methods of language teaching which have produced the many thousands of English-speaking Russians who surprise every tourist from this country with their fluency.

The Young Marx

Recherches Internationales, a Marxist journal edited in France with an international Editorial Board, has done a valuable service. It does not, in the main, print original articles, but reprints articles (or sections of books) from the ideological journals of the international Communist movement. Each issue is devoted to a special subject.

Subjects to date have included The Origins of Fascism; State and Classes in slave society; Automation; Problems of Modern Capitalism; Religion; Philosophy; Linguistics; Social Democracy; and Problems of the Transition from Socialism to Communism.

The fortcoming issue (No. 19) will be devoted to a study of *The Young Marx*. It will contain articles by leading Marxists from many countries on many diverse aspects of the early life and writings of Karl Marx. These will include studies of "The formation of the philosophical ideas of Marx"; "From Hegel to Marxism"; "The Marxist conception of alienation"; and articles on some of the early works of Marx like "The Critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right"; "The Economico-Philosophical Manuscripts"; and "The German Ideology".

This Changing World

The dialectics of history are not kind to the reactionary powers that be. Indeed, in many fields, powers that "be" are becoming powers that "were".

It is awkward, to say the least, when those who have always launched fulsome praises for the block vote find the majority of trade unions at Scarborough voting for peace. It is not pleasant for the right wing, who have used the decisions of Labour Party Conferences to discipline progressive M.P.s, to find themselves in a minority.

Nor are the powers of war happy at U.N.O. to find that they are no longer in command of the old automatic majority that they have come to regard as their "right".

From the outset of this recent General Assembly they found that things were no longer what they used to be. When Mr. Khrushchov and the heads of state from several socialist countries announced that they were going to New York, and called on other heads of state to do likewise, they were met

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with indignant repudiation. Nothing would take President Eisenhower from his golf or Premier Macmillan from his grouse! But the *Baltika* sailed. The President made his appearance, followed belatedly by Mr. Macmillan and a rather melancholy Menzies.

They found at New York a U.N.O. General Assembly that seemed to be slipping out of their fingers. Out of roughly 100 member-states, over forty votes are now Afro-Asian. The vote on the question of admitting China to U.N.O., with 42 voting against to 34, with 22 abstentions, was far the narrowest to date, and no one has any doubt that the U.S.A., on this vital issue, is now on the verge of defeat.

The balance of forces in the world is changing almost hourly in favour of the forces of peace and socialism. Imperialism views with horror the "threat" of U.N.O. becoming what it was founded to be—an instrument of peace. And it is easy to understand why, in the words of the *Sunday Observer* reporter, "the Western diplomats" regarded "the historic Assembly largely as an ordeal to be endured rather than an opportunity to be seized".

Leningrad Symphony Orchestra

The visit to Britain of the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra aroused even more astonishment and enthusiasm than the friends of socialism could hope for. Rarely has there been more complete unanimity of opinion about the extraordinarily high quality of the orchestra from every point of view.

It can be stated without fear of contradiction, that the Leningrad Orchestra is in a different class from all other European orchestras at the present time.

The interest, as far as the programmes were concerned, centred in the works of Shostakovich, notably in the 'Cello Concerto. This brilliant addition to the repertoire of 'cellists was played with such mastery by Rostropovich, that its incredible difficulties sounded almost negligible. After a lengthy and sustained quick movement, extremely vivid and energetic, came the lyrical second movement and cadenza combined; here the remarkable passage in harmonics was so marvellously played that it succeeded entirely. The third section of the concerto is less memorable. The composer received an ovation at the Royal Festival Hall which was tremendous.

As though by design of some Marxist propagandist for the evident superiority of socialism over capitalism in both material and cultural fields, comes further news from Manchester of renewed crisis in the affairs of the Hallé Orchestra. This has been brought to a head by the conditions provided for the players in the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra who get more money and less work than the Hallé. The anomalous conditions of Arts Council Grants to symphony orchestras are at last to be examined at an inquiry, demanded by Sir John Barbirolli. In any case the grants to the best subsidised orchestra are miserably inadequate. The Leningrad Symphony Orchestra has shown what proper conditions can produce. Yet even under capitalism things can be better than they are now, and we should fight for their improvement.

South African Communist Party Journal

The most courageous venture in Communist publications this year is the launching of a quarterly journal entitled *The African Communist* by the illegal Communist Party of South Africa. The last issue for 1960 has just appeared in forty-eight printed pages. On the first inside page the journal explains its aim is "to defend and spread the inspiring and liberating ideas of Communism in our great continent, and to apply the brilliant scientific method of Marxism to the solution of its problems".

Never was a journal of this kind so timely, and so essential when new political advances are changing the face of the African continent. It is precisely in this situation that illusions arise that political independence means the end of imperialist domination, about "positive neutralism" and some unique "African personality", and that Marxism is not relevant to the problems of African liberation.

The journal tackles all these arguments in a lively style. In No. 2 there are striking articles on the Coalbrook mine disaster and on "Marxism and African Liberation". In the current number the editorial is entitled "Problems of a Continent in Revolution", which goes to the heart of the basic issues in Africa today. There are also first-class articles on Lenin and Africa, the Congo, United States and Africa, and on Nigerian independence.

In the conditions of terror existing in the "Republic" of South Africa no printer could produce this journal. It is produced in London, and it gives the name and address of its London agent: Mr. Ellis Bowles, 52 Palmerston Road, East Sheen, London, S.W.13, to whom orders can be sent at 1s. 6d. each (post free) or 10s. a dozen.

Note from a reader—and our reply

Writing to welcome the Editorial Comments in our July issue, G. Hudson (Pembroke, South Wales) adds the following comment:

"You rightly criticise two aspects of R. H. S. Crossman's pamphlet *Labour in the Affluent Society*. Yet despite these aspects, despite his fear and hatred of the Soviet Union, despite his attitude to N.A.T.O. and to strikes, this pamphlet is basically progressive and socialist. (It was not until I had read it that I realised that the term 'Affluent Society' has been used ironically, as it is by Crossman.)

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"To anyone who is used to reading ignorant or falsified statements about Marx and Marxism and the Soviet Union, the total effect of the pamphlet must be salutary. After all, he is concerned to show, quite effectively, that in this ('affluent') society where personal consumption of luxury articles such as motor cars, electrical gadgets, etc., by a large section of the population is so conspicuous, basic investment in our transport system, education, health and other social services is criminally neglected. He suggests that socialism is necessary, despite what the Tories and Labour Party revisionists say, in order that the wealth which exists in this society can be divided more rationally between private and sensible public spending, and in order that more wealth be created.

"This line I think he develops very forcibly and readably. In general I am convinced that the pamphlet will do much more good than harm in the Labour movement. The young Socialists here are reading it. And usually they don't have the opportunity of reading *our* pamphlets (although ours are usually much cheaper!)."

We welcome comments, and thank G. Hudson for sending in his. But we simply cannot agree with his suggestion that despite Crossman's misrepresentation of Marxism, despite his thoughtless use of the term 'affluent society', "despite his fear and hatred of the Soviet Union, despite his attitude to N.A.T.O. and to strikes, this pamphlet is basically progressive and socialist". These are a formidable list of "despites", and the residue of the pamphlet would have to be outstanding to counterbalance them.

It is perfectly true that the capitalist class put private capital accumulation and luxury expenditure before basic public expenditure, and this is wrong. But there is a very great danger in shifting this to mean that working-class consumers are spending too much on private consumption and resources must be taken from them in order to finance public investment. This is one-sided and wrong. There are millions of working-class consumers who cannot afford the cars, fridges and the rest. There are other millions who can only attain them by sacrificing other things. Talk about the affluent society tends to obscure this.

Certainly socialism would increase public expenditure, and would find the resources for it by ending the luxury expenditure of the rich. But socialism aims to end the exploitation of the workers and put the control of the economy in the hands of society, and not merely to achieve a different balance between public and private expenditure.

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After the Labour Party Conference

John Mahon

THE decisions of the Scarborough Labour Party Conference are a severe defeat for the right-wing leadership on three major questions —foreign policy, the party's socialist aim, and the constitutional authority of the Conference.

The bi-partisan foreign policy of the leader and the National Executive, expressed in a statement misnamed "Defence", was rejected by 3,339,000 votes to 3,042,000, majority 297,000; and two resolutions contrary to the right-wing policy were adopted. That of the A.E.U. calling for "renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling and basing of nuclear weapons in Great Britain" received 3,303,000 votes to 2,896,000, majority 407,000. That of the T.G.W.U. rejecting a policy based on the strategy of the nuclear weapon, whether British or N.A.T.O. owned, received 3,282,000 votes to 3,239,000, majority 43,000.

These decisions are a powerful blow in the growing mass struggle to free Britain from the policy of suicidal nuclear strategy and of being the site of bases from which American or N.A.T.O. missiles can be launched without British authority, but bringing reprisals on the British people.

The Conference confirmed the maintenance in the constitution of Clause 4, unaltered, in which the aim of socialism is to be obtained through "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" and in addition adopted a resolution calling for the extension of nationalisation. The right wing prior to the Conference conceded victory to the defenders of Clause 4, at least for the moment, but their spokesmen showed that they continued to hold the views which had led to the proposal to remove this clause, and they succeeded in getting Conference endorsement of their proposals for the state purchase of shares in privately-owned companies, and for the so-called "mixed economy".

The Conference confirmed the constitutional position that it is the body which makes the final decisions on policy, and carried a resolution which specifically stated that Labour M.P.s are bound to accept Conference decisions, though the Executive in accepting this resolution did so with the serious qualification that it "did not change existing practice"; its spokesman also made reference to Clause V of the Party Constitution, which says that "No proposal shall be included in the Party Programme unless it has been adopted by the Party Conference by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes recorded on a card vote"—a rule never operated when a right-wing policy was in question.

Carried, as they were, in the face of prolonged and unscrupulous efforts to confuse the issues and induce delegates to disregard their mandates, threats of disaffiliation, and prophecies of disaster, these decisions reflect a tremendous growth of Left opinion, particularly in the trade unions, whose votes were decisive in defeating the Right.

That Left opinion has become strong enough to defeat the leader of the Labour Party and the Executive at Conference, on issues which so vitally affect the future of the Labour movement and of the British people, marks a new stage in the struggle, and will in itself greatly hearten all in the Labour Party who are striving for peace and socialism.

But while the balance of power in the Labour Party is changing, the Executive is still dominated by the right wing. The Conference did not elect a leadership corresponding to its policy decisions.

It would be wrong to think that the decisions will now become the policy of the leadership; on the contrary, Mr. Gaitskell, before the vote was taken, and later on television, gave a clarion call in terms far stronger than he has ever used in the fight against the Tories, to fight against the decision on nuclear strategy. He incited the Labour M.P.s to oppose it publicly, and called for its reversal at the next Conference, suggesting that this might be held in the spring.

So while the Left forces won a moral and political victory at Scarborough, there will now be a most determined effort by the Right, with the full support of the capitalist press and radio, first to sabotage and then to reverse the decisions. The immediate consequence will be an intensification of the struggle between Left and Right throughout the whole Labour movement and at all levels in the Labour Party.

The right-wing leaders, never noted for their regard for democratic practice or mass discussion, may be expected to do everything and to use all means, fair or foul, in this struggle, because for them everything is at stake.

The Scarborough Conference took a step on a

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road which, if continued, will lead to the defeat not only of right-wing policy, but of the right-wing leadership, and this the right wing fully realise, as do their capitalist allies, and both will do all they can to prevent such a transformation in the Labour movement.

But there is greater potential support for a Left policy than anything the Right can mobilise. There is the rising mass movement of the organised workers, the youth, and wider sections of the people, which on a wide variety of issues, with peace in the centre, is by action as well as words, demanding a Left policy.

It is by placing themselves in line with this rising movement that the Left forces can open up a new political future for Labour, the winning of the majority of the people for the ending of Tory rule for ever and for the victory of peace and socialism.

Campaign for the Policy Adopted

The urgent and immediate need is to develop and sustain throughout the Labour movement, among the working class and the public, a great campaign for the understanding and endorsement of the Scarborough decisions, and for pressure on the Labour M.P.s and all members of the Executive to carry on the fight for these decisions.

With the capitalist propaganda machine in full blast, it would be fatal for the left to rely on the normal methods by which Conference is reported to committee meetings. What is wanted is large-scale activity by the trade unions, the constituency Labour Parties, the Trades Councils and Co-operatives, and the journals and publications of the Labour movement. The factories are particularly important as centres of sustained mass discussion. The progressive trade unions and Left constituency parties could reach most factories and pits in Britain by sending their spokesmen to officially report the Conference to mass meetings of the workers.

In fact there is no other way for the Left spokesmen to counter the work of the capitalist propaganda machine than to go direct to the organised workers with their political case.

Such a campaign would be a tremendous political education for all concerned. It would be a first step to rally the Labour voters and to win new ones for the coming elections.

Such a campaign would bring the Left forces into closer touch with the immediate struggles of the workers on wages, rents, and other issues, and would assist in working out the most effective presentation of the arguments for a Labour peace policy, an independent challenge to the whole Tory cold war, American "alliance", Russian-menace conception.

For it would be a weakness to consider that the last word in the most effective presentation of the Left case had been said at Scarborough, or that the battle for policy is won when delegates at conferences are converted.

The right wing has thrown down the gauntlet. The battle is on now to decide whether the Labour Party is to be controlled by the democratic decisions of its affiliated bodies and its national conference, or by a highly organised right-wing caucus in close alliance with the capitalist press and radio, every day interfering in the internal affairs of the party. For the left not to take up the challenge would mean its political suicide. In order to take it up effectively, the issues must be placed before the masses of Labour workers, and their support won.

The left cannot stand still on the positions taken at Scarborough. The fact must be faced that Labour's crisis is one of leadership as well as policy. It is worse than useless to expect that Left policy will be carried out by Right leaders. The experience of the Trades Union Congress in recent years shows that resolutions may be carried by the Congress, even without opposition, but that the General Council can record in its report to the next Congress, that it has pursued a policy incompatible with those resolutions, and not be called to account.

The Left forces cannot, unless they want to give up the struggle, accept the illogicality that the Parliamentary Party, which is obliged to accept Conference decisions on policy, can elect as leader a man whose policy has been defeated by the Conference, and who has publicly declared his intention to lead the fight against Conference decisions.

The Future of the Labour Party

What happened at Scarborough inevitably raises the question of the future of the Labour Party, what is it to become? Left opinion will be obliged to take an attitude on this question, for the Right have already done so.

The Right have made known the kind of Labour Party they want—a liberal, non-socialist party, without trade union control and without a working-class concept of politics, a non-class party free to adopt a bi-partisan policy in support of capitalism at home and abroad. For such a party the main enemy would be the socialist countries and the Communists; the main friend, American imperialism; the banner, anti-communism. British politics would then be conducted on the American system of two professional political machines, both integral parts of the state, without difference of principle, and the work and sacrifice of generations who have built the Labour Party would be thrown on to the scrap heap.

This would of course suit the capitalists down to the ground, for it would politically disarm the organised Labour movement. In its present phase

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of decline and retreat, British imperialism views with fear the existence of a mass party of labour with socialist aims and trade union support, not for what it has done under right-wing leadership, but for what it will do in the future with a Left policy and leadership.

The Right have beaten a tactical retreat in face of the resistance aroused by their direct attack on Clause 4, but they have not given up the struggle and will find new ways to advance to their aim.

But what kind of Labour Party do the Left forces want?

This question must now be thrashed out in mass discussion, because it is not enough to be against right-wing policy and concepts; the left must have its own, positive, alternative. This alternative policy must not only be able to rally enough support to end right-wing domination within the party, it must also be capable of winning the support of the great majority of the electorate in order to end Tory rule in the country.

In general the left is for peace, democracy, colonial freedom, and socialism through public ownership. But these are general terms, only when they are made specific can there be a clear differentiation between Left and Right. At Scarborough the left began to detail what it meant by a peace policy, at least as far as nuclear strategy and some of its consequences went. In doing so, it began to outline a peace policy independent of that of the Tories and the bi-partisan right wing.

The tremendous effort made for months throughout the Labour movement to bring about the Left victory at Scarborough was made because people felt they were fighting for something clear, definite and quite different from what the Tories and the right wing wanted. They were fighting to ban the bomb, get rid of the American bases, end the reliance on nuclear strategy and N.A.T.O., and stop the West Germans getting the nuclear weapon. The great growth of Left strength and unity which won at Scarborough, as at the T.U.C., developed around these specific demands and not just the general idea of peace.

When the Left forces go further, work out their own positive and full peace policy, work out what they mean by public ownership and socialism, formulate a detailed policy in line with the immediate needs of the people on social services, industrial and other issues, then they will have political weapons which will rally overwhelming support against the Right, and be the basis of a general election policy which will win the majority for Labour.

Can the Left forces formulate and come to agreement on such a comprehensive policy? They can, if they will consult the workers and the people, if they will be democratic in their methods.

Labour Party Conference endorsement for the stream of right-wing policy documents which were the basis of the election programmes of 1951, 1955 and 1959, all of which led to defeat, was gained without adequate mass discussion on policy, and by the undemocratic procedure which prevents amendments being moved at Conference to policy documents, which must be voted for or against in their entirety.

Just as the left gained strength by giving leadership to the rising movement in the country against the nuclear strategy and for a peace policy, so can it gain further strength from leading the rising movement on wages, hours, rents, housing, pensions, education, nationalisation, redundancy and other issues vitally affecting the people's lives.

The Decisive Left Forces

The decisive force is the organised working class and the trade unions. It was the progressive trade union vote at Scarborough which carried the left to victory, in alliance with the socialist-minded constituency parties. This alliance proved capable of defeating the Right, even though the majority of the constituency parties voted for Gaitskell.

There is a lesson here for those on the Left who put all their eggs in the constituency basket, and mistakenly saw the trade union block vote as permanently reactionary. It is the many years of patient and arduous work of the militants in the trade unions, including Communists and Socialists, which brought about this change in the casting of the trade union vote.

This development is of historic importance because the Right has traditionally relied on the trade union vote to endorse its policy. The change in position of powerful trade unions undermines the foundation of the long standing right-wing domination of the Labour Party Conference. Because they can no longer rely on the trade union vote, the right wing are thinking about separating the unions from the party.

The leftward development in the trade unions is the result of democratic discussion and of experience of Tory policy. The more the top leaders are guided by the decisions of the membership in the branches and at the union conference, the more the union vote at T.U.C. and Labour Party Conference supports Left policy.

The A.E.U. is a case in point, for the "vote both ways" trick worked by Mr. Carron at the T.U.C. was such a flagrant violation of the democratic decisions of the membership, and aroused such resentment throughout the union, that, despite the absence of Communists, it could not be repeated at Scarborough.

The hard core of right-wing support is those

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unions where democratic life is limited and top officialdom, sometimes not regularly elected, is able to dictate policy. This can only be done when the membership is passive. Today the membership of all unions is thinking hard and is on the move; dictatorship is out of step and will be difficult to maintain.

It was the trade unions which defeated the right-wing attempt to change Clause 4. This defence of the socialist aim was partly a reaffirmation of conclusions based on long and bitter experience of capitalism, and partly recognition that capitalism today is unable to meet the people's needs.

It is the continued development of Left thought in the trade unions and the winning of more trade unions for Left policy which will be the main force in defeating the right-wing attempts to reverse the process begun at Scarborough. That is why the public presentation of the Left case needs to be in terms that will fully appeal to the organised workers, and to cover all their main interests.

The biggest force to change the position of those constituency parties which support the Gaitskell line is, apart from where the middle class dominates through individual membership, the trade union delegates.

The danger facing the Left forces is that they take too narrow a view of what can be done, and seek a basis in committees and coteries instead of coming out boldly as a mass force.

The course of events is such that the mass of organised workers will continue to move to the Left, and will welcome leadership expressing their demands in a Left policy.

The forces and trends which won the Scarborough victory are rising and developing forces capable of securing a Left leadership of the Labour Party, and raising the Labour Party with a Left policy to the majority in Parliament.

Unity and Militancy

The three main trends which united to win at Scarborough were—the rising trade union militancy on economic questions, the revival of socialist thinking, and the mass popular desire for a peace policy which would ban the nuclear weapon and safeguard Britain.

Militancy on economic questions, including official national trade union strikes and mass united action on rents, is the only possible answer to the growing arrogance, rapacity and brutality of the Tories. The employers ceaselessly step up the exploitation of labour on the job and concede wage increases with the maximum delay and of the smallest possible amount. The cost of living continually rises, outrageous rent increases are imposed, corruption and speculation flourish. Slander in the press and on the radio, and the increasing use of the police baton and prison sentences, are meted out to those who resist Tory policy. As the Tory pressure on the workers increases, so will the militant resistance to it.

Socialist thinking is stimulated by the contrast between the capacity of modern science and productive resources to improve the lives of the people, and the use made of them by monopoly capital, which cares only for profits and armaments and is incapable of solving such problems as housing, education, transport and town planning. There is also the growing awareness of the great changes in the world, the world with which Britain must trade if she is to live, where the sands of imperialism are almost run out, bringing problems to the British people for which capitalism has no solution. A powerful influence is the fact, which capitalist propaganda cannot prevent reaching millions, that socialism is today the way of life of a thousand million people, who are living better without capitalists and landlords than they ever did before, and that the socialist countries lead the world in science, education and public health, while their foreign policy ceaselessly strives for peace and colonial freedom. Compared with these achievements, British Labour lags behind, and where others have socialism, it has not even realised such long-standing demands as the forty-hour week and equal pay for equal work.

The tremendous efforts of the Soviet Union for peaceful coexistence have done a great deal to develop the desire for peace into the understanding that there must be mass action in support of a peace policy. This has reached great heights among the trade unions, shown by the 1960 T.U.C., and among the public, shown by the support for the great marches organised by the British Peace Committee and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. But the American provocations continue, the West Germans are on the brink of getting the nuclear weapon, there is no progress on disarmament.

So all these streams are growing and will grow further, and all find detestable the spectacle of the right-wing leaders in Parliament, in the press and on television, putting forward a policy and an attitude indistinguishable from that of the Tories.

Remembering the election defeats of 1959 and the two previous elections, the further losses in the 1960 local elections, seeing no change at the top, the conviction grows wider and wider that the right wing are leading the Labour movement to defeat, disintegration and impotence, just when its giant strength should be marshalled for victory.

The millions who want peace, a better life and a socialist society want a Labour Party which will help them realise these aims.

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A Labour Party united around a policy for securing peace, meeting the people's needs and advancing to socialism, maintaining the federal structure which enables the trade unions to constitute its main strength, improving its democracy so that all participate in the discussion of policy, and that the elected leadership corresponds to the policy decided, ensuring that its Parliamentary representatives are loyal champions of its policy, continually campaigning among the people and on behalf of the people—surely that is the only kind of Labour Party that can satisfy the Left forces?

To develop the Labour Party in this way would be to meet modern conditions while remaining loyal to the principles of the pioneers, who wanted to combine the struggle for socialism with the struggle for immediate needs and who never for a moment contemplated the idea of alliance with the Tories and imitation of Tory policy.

A Labour Party with such a policy would not mean that demands for democratic reforms would be disregarded. On the contrary there would be more effective campaigning for democratic advance, for it would be seen as essential to open the way for socialism.

Neither would there be any question of indifference to the needs of the middle class. On the contrary there would be effective presentation of middle-class interests, for the middle class would be seen as an ally in the struggle against monopoly capital.

Such a Labour Party would be in line with the trend of world events today, since it would unite all those who want peace, democracy and socialism.

Communism and the Left forces

This advance of the Left forces can only take place in the midst of intensified struggle against Tory policy by the masses of industrial workers, and with the deepening of their class consciousness and socialist understanding. The Communist Party, with its Marxist theory, its socialist programme, and its ability to inspire its membership to carry on continuous political activity and to give leadership on all aspects of the class struggle, is the organised political force indispensable to this development.

Only the Communist Party has produced a political programme for the realisation of socialism in Britain. The sale of nearly a quarter of a million copies of this programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, in ten years has helped to keep socialist thought alive among the workers. The more the Left forces get down to the problem of defining precisely what they mean by socialism, and how they propose to get it in Britain, the more they will find common ground with the Communists.

The Communist Party, with the help of thousands of workers, has created the only socialist daily newspaper in Britain. The *Daily Worker* is the best organiser of Left opinion and is indispensable to the growth of the Left movement.

Being a Marxist party, the Communist Party has always combined the political and economic struggle for the immediate needs of the workers with socialist education. The more Left spokesmen go to the workers, the more they will find the growing united action of Communists, Socialists and progressives.

When the right wing expelled the Communists from the Labour Party and banned them from certain trade union positions, they did so precisely to hamper the growth of left opinion by removing its most class-conscious spokesmen.

At this moment when such great possibilities open up for the Left forces, the activity of all Communists should include political appreciation of the problems faced by the Left and practical assistance in winning support. It is not a matter of seeking and stressing differences, or expecting left wingers to agree with Communists on everything, and criticising them when they don't. It is a matter of establishing friendly relations, discussing problems, and conducting our own work in a way which helps trade unionists and Labour Party people to understand that the defence of the immediate needs of the workers, and the advance of socialism, require the advance and victory of a Left policy and leadership in the Labour Party.

In their own way, both Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Carron have acknowledged the contribution made by the Communists in the trade unions to the development at Scarborough. The more the left realises that the trade unions are its mass basis, the more it develops the class presentation which attracts the industrial workers, the more it will understand the service the Communists are rendering.

Some people speak as though the left were a kind of third force in between the Right and the Communists. Today in Britain the Right are the political representatives and defenders of the interests of monopoly capital and big business, with all their class resources. The only left which can oppose them successfully must be able to bring into action the working class and the middle classes, must present itself as the spokesmen and champion of their class interests. This means that the unity of the Left forces must include the Communists, or the Right will gain from the division.

The division of the left, which began with the expulsion of the Communists from the Labour Party in 1924, and has been intensified since the beginning of the cold war, must now be ended. The victory at Scarborough would have been impossible without joint action with the Communists.

Anti-communism is the main propaganda weapon

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used to divide the forces of peace and socialism, which if united would be able to defeat the monopolists. Anti-communism rests mainly on the Big Lie of Soviet aggression, the fantasy that the Soviet Union wants to conquer Britain. This is the basis for the right-wing arguments for the cold war, N.A.T.O., nuclear strategy, American bases, West German rearmament and the arms race.

Accept or tolerate the Big Lie, and you bolster up the right-wing argument. Dodge the Big Lie and you will find it used to deprive you of support for a peace policy. Break through the Big Lie and you break down the foundation of right-wing policy.

Left opinion cannot tolerate the Big Lie, or any form of anti-communism, except at the cost of aligning itself with the Right and helping its own defeat.

Some left wingers who do not accept the Big Lie, and are not themselves anti-communist, nevertheless fear to establish friendly relations and joint action with the Communists. They are afraid of the public prejudice manufactured by the anti-communist campaign, or of disciplinary action by the Labour leaders.

But left wingers will have to overcome anti-communist prejudice, because as long as it exists, it can be used against them any time the capitalist propaganda machine decides to dub them "Communist". Left wingers will have to secure the withdrawal of the bans and proscriptions, or they will be used to discipline them any time the Right leadership decides to call them "Communist", and also because the bans deprive the left wing of some of its most capable forces.

Considering the history of nearly sixty years of the Labour Party, some people may doubt whether the tremendous change involved in winning the Labour Party for a Left policy and leadership can possibly come about. Certainly the Right will use all its power to prevent it. But the Right rose to domination of the Labour movement during the period when the imperialists could decide the course of events. That period has gone. Today socialism, together with the national liberation movement, is the most powerful force in the world. We are now living in the period of world transition to socialism, and with the power of imperialism going, the basis of right-wing domination also goes.

It will be the rise in the class struggle that will make it possible to break the right-wing grip, and in that struggle the growth of the Communist Party and the advance of the Left forces will develop together.

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Vulcans over the African Volcano

B. R. Mann

SPREAD over almost half the back page of *The Times* there appeared on June 10th, 1960, a photograph of what at first sight looked like a butterfly on a rose. The headline and caption soon made one realise, however, that the butterfly was a British Vulcan bomber and the rose the snowy ridges of Mount Kilimanjaro, on the borders of Kenya and Tanganyika.

What is a nuclear bomber doing in East Africa?

The Times special correspondent appears to know all about it; he was privileged actually to make a flight in a Vulcan from the Finningley R.A.F. base via Cyprus and Libya to Nairobi, 9,960 miles to Kenya and back on time, he proudly reports.

He was hardly accorded this singular privilege merely to boost a technical record. Vulcan bombers are equipped to carry the *Blue Steel* "stand-off" nuclear bomb which can be released from up to 400 miles from target. The range of these bombs is being constantly increased; the bombers can be fitted with the American *Skybolt*; even more efficient machines are coming off the drawing boards: vertical take-off aircraft, supersonic bombers, a whole arsenal of means of delivering nuclear warheads each one of which can deal death to millions of people at one blow.

The Vulcan flight to Kenya was publicised a bare three weeks after the Western powers had engineered the breakdown of the Summit Conference and while the British people were shocked at the rumour that British nuclear planes *might* engage in joint round-the-clock nuclear patrols with the United States Air Force. But, as the *Times* Defence Correspondent calmly explained four days later, Britain had a much better and less expensive way of its own of effecting the same thing, and, what is more, *had been practising it for some considerable time.*

Britain's method is to conceal the whereabouts of its nuclear bomber force by sending a part of it on random flights from one end of the empire to the other. Such flights "*are regularly carried out along the normal trooping routes to the Far East* (using the R.A.F. staging point at Gan) *and Africa.* . . . In May a *Valiant* bomber flew non-stop from Norfolk to Singapore, having twice re-fuelled in the air en route . . . it seems likely that *V bombers going overseas on training flights will normally carry their nuclear weapons with them.* . . . The Commonwealth offers obvious opportunities for dispersal, *of which the R.A.F. already make use.*"

Out of sight, out of sound, at any time of day or night, R.A.F. planes may be flying their deadly cargo over the heads of countless millions of unsuspecting people.

For what purpose?

We have been led to believe that it is necessary for Britain to possess nuclear bombs for the sake of "defence", of "deterring" a "potential aggressor". With that beautiful play of words that come so easily to the lips of gentlemen trained in Eton or Harrow, the ordinary people of Britain are persuaded that it is their safety which is the unceasing concern of Tory nuclear strategy.

Yet when this strategy was first openly ventilated in the House of Commons on February 13th, 1957, Mr. Sandys, then Minister of Defence, raised a strange question:

"A difficult question to decide is how much of the effort should be devoted to the air defence of Britain".

Only two months later, in the White Paper on Defence published on April 5th, 1957, the point was put already in a much stronger form; it explained that the new strategy was based on the "frank recognition that there is at present no means of providing adequate protection for the people of this country against the consequences of an attack with nuclear weapons".

In point of fact, no thought of the defence of Britain can be discovered in the provisions of the White Papers or any other authoritative statements on military policy. The theory that the nuclear strategy was intended as a "deterrent" did not hold water even when it might still be assumed that the expression "potential aggressor" could, for example, refer to a power like Western Germany. But already the 1957 White Paper put any such thought out of the minds of the naive. It said:

"The time has now come to revise not merely the size *but the whole character* of the defence plan. The *communist threat remains*, but its nature has changed; and it is now evident that both on military and economic grounds it is necessary to make a fresh appreciation of the problem and to adopt a new attitude towards it. . . ."

In this oblique form the enemy against whom the

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new strategy was directed was now officially named as communism, that is to say, since military strategy is a question of state, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

Whatever Tory *propaganda* may say about the intentions of the Soviet Union, Mr. Macmillan cannot plead ignorance of the fact that communism does not have to be deterred from launching nuclear war upon the world, that its policy is peaceful coexistence. The obvious purpose of the deterrent theory is therefore to blunt the impact of the announcement and to disarm popular opposition, to condition the public mind to passive acceptance of the "new approach".

Any faint hope that this "new approach" might contain an element at least of response to the growing popular desire for a relaxation of tension, some degree of disarmament or disengagement, not to mention peaceful coexistence, is dispelled by an attentive reading of the White Paper and the speeches with which it was introduced. Already Mr. Duncan Sandys hinted darkly at measures "which would be desirable *should the deterrent fail*". Mr. Macmillan in his summing up of the debate on April 17th said:

". . . it is clear that not only must forces be made mobile by the provision of modern transport, but they must be armed and backed by *the most effective weapons available*. Therefore, whether we like it or not, *the decision on weapons governs the whole issue*. . . . The fundamental decision which the House must face, without vacillation, is whether or not the nuclear deterrent is to form *the basis* of British defence planning."

From the moment that the House, after a feeble show of opposition by the Labour Party, made that decision there could no longer be any doubt that what was being prepared was a total nuclear attack on the Soviet Union on the part of Britain, whatever any other power might be doing. Mr. Macmillan sometimes speaks with two voices, his military planners never.

In search of a base

Even if it had been more thinly disguised, such an idea would have struck the majority of the ordinary British people as too fantastically mad to be credible. The propaganda by which their eyes and ears are daily assaulted has accustomed them to think of Britain as a "third rate" power, a poor country which has lost, or is about to lose, her empire, the mainstay of her former greatness. Only madmen could conceive of competing in nuclear power with the United States, which boasts not only of possessing enough nuclear bombs to destroy the world several times over but instead of a small and vulnerable island has a whole continent for its base.

A moment's reflection will show, however, that the American boast is a little out of focus. The fundamental point at issue is the almost inconceivable destructive power of the individual nuclear bomb. The atomic bombs which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki are today classed as small stuff, "tactical" weapons in military parlance. The "strategic" bombs, including Britain's "poor man's" hydrogen bomb, are of such a destructive power that quite a small number of them would suffice to put a large area of the world out of action as a going concern in the first "nuclear strike". (Less than a dozen would do for Britain.)

The vulnerability of the British base was therefore the main problem which engaged the planners of the nuclear strike. In the speech already quoted above where Mr. Sandys raised the question of the measures "which would be desirable *should the deterrent fail*", he mused:

Should the Navy provide an element in the deterrent—in other words, was the use of carrier-borne aircraft contemplated as part of Britain's nuclear bombing effort? To what extent should naval forces be provided for roles which did not contribute directly to the deterrent? In particular, how much effort should be devoted to providing naval forces to protect Atlantic communications against the threat of Soviet submarines? How soon after the outbreak of full-scale nuclear war might one expect that shipping across the Atlantic could be resumed? After the initial attack, would the harbours of Britain and Western Europe still be usable? Had one to assume that when the first all-out phase was over, there would follow a second phase, sometimes described as "broken-back" war in which operations at sea would play a major part? . . . In addition, consideration had to be given as to what naval forces Britain needed for more limited operations and other duties in distant theatres where the Navy and its mobile air power had an important role to play.

Mr. Sandys did not "at this stage" purport to answer these suggestive questions. But he was certainly weighing up the possibilities of a situation conceived as a perfectly real prospect with a cool and calculating mind.

One should not allow the shock of such a ghastly prospect being considered at all to obscure the deliberate artlessness with which the mind of the hearer is directed away from Britain and Western Europe to the wide open seas, to distant theatres, to the Navy and its mobile air power. Nor should the casual reference to "more limited operations and other duties" be taken at its face value. Every single step subsequently taken to implement the nuclear strategy, including the flights of the Vulcans, has shown that Mr. Sandys' purpose was to prepare the way for a new conception of the material base for the nuclear strike, a base of world-wide dimensions.

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East of Suez

With remarkable promptness suggestions for new bases were coming forward. On March 4th a Colonel Fitzgerald from Nairobi started a correspondence in *The Times* in which quite a number of more eminent persons, including Members of Parliament Geoffrey de Freitas, Hugh Frazer, Frederic Gough, joined. Correctly following Mr. Sandys' gaze they fixed their attention in the direction "East of Suez".

"I cannot think why the British Government bothers about having military bases in Cyprus, Libya, etc., when these bases might be so easily transferred to Kenya. . . . Kenya, being midway, so to speak for any future military operations which are likely to occur in the future in the east. Not only does Kenya stand out as a military base, but also as a naval base as well, where there is the best deep-sea harbour on the east coast of Africa. . . . I cannot think of any other place east of Suez which compares more favourably as a base than Kenya," the Colonel wrote.

Summing up the correspondence, *The Times* wrote editorially on March 13th, 1957:

". . . there is already a marginal strategic case to be made for a base in Kenya. Events elsewhere might make it compelling."

The article recalled that the idea was first propounded after the war when Palestine was about to be evacuated and an early withdrawal from the Canal zone seemed likely, and that it had the support of Field Marshal Montgomery. But the paper did not share the illusions of the Colonel that it would be so easy. The first determined attempt to establish a base in Kenya in 1952, when the cruiser *Kenya* steamed into Mombasa harbour and disgorged the troops for "Operation Jock Scott" had foundered on the resistance of the Kikuyu. The result was a sanguinary colonial war, in which eleven thousand Africans lost their lives. One in every four adult Kikuyu men were either killed or thrown into the concentration camps, which had originally been intended as barracks for the British base. The end of that war had only just come in sight with the hanging of the resistance leader Dedan Kimathi.

In weighing up the pros and cons, however, the article made some telling remarks which gave further shape to the new strategic concept. "The trend now is to rely on home-based, air transported units for the strategic reserve. The transport aircraft need staging points to alight on, although the increasing range of modern types makes this consideration progressively less important . . . a training base somewhere in a hot climate remains necessary to the Army. . . . To the Navy, Mombasa is a tempting haven on the Indian Ocean. But they still have the use of Simonstown and Aden. Moreover, Britain's juridical status in Mombasa can be challenged. The claims of Kenya have therefore to be weighed carefully against those of Cyprus, which is admittedly on the wrong side of the Middle East barrier, and Aden, which is now in the frontline."

Evidently, the Indian Ocean is here considered to be *on the right side* of the Middle East barrier. Most of us will need to have their atlas handy to grasp the full significance of this.

The Indian Ocean is that large sheet of water which extends along the whole length of the Asian continent, from the Arabian Peninsula to Australia, due south of all points in the countries of socialism, and on all sides fringed by countries of the Commonwealth and Empire.

From Kriegsverein to Nuclear Club

In presenting the Naval Estimates on April 26th, 1957, Mr. Soames, Parliamentary Secretary, Admiralty, stressed that the modern aircraft carrier provided a unique instrument for carrying out the Government's aim of being able to deploy aircraft power to meet emergencies anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Government visualised the Navy "as a number of carrier task forces, each consisting of one carrier armed with the most modern aircraft weapons that can be procured, a cruiser, and a number of destroyers and frigates for protection both from the air and from the sea". No other organisation could be so self-sufficient, mobile and versatile, and its mobility had "the added merit that the Navy did not need to remain permanently poised in any potential trouble centre—an ever present irritation to local susceptibilities".

This recurrent theme of caution was dictated by the post-Suez crisis and the circumstances under which the Macmillan Government had come into being. At no time have the Commonwealth bonds been so close to breaking point as after the abortive Suez aggression. India, already alienated by the war against Kenya, had taken the neutralist line and played a leading role at the Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations. Few would have been surprised if after Suez she had broken with the Commonwealth altogether. Ceylon gave Britain notice to quit the bases in Trincomalee and Katunayake. An incautious remark of Mr. Duncan Sandys which suggested that nuclear weapons might be stored in Malaya prompted energetic official protests even from that quarter. The first Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference called by Mr. Macmillan did not promise to be a great success, and it was not even pretended afterwards that it had been.

The *Daily Telegraph* complained in an editorial:

"Much is uncertain and ill-defined in the Commonwealth of 1957. . . . It is no longer a single defence community whose solidarity could be counted on in case of war. . . . The British desire to

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disperse nuclear forces and potential in Commonwealth bases can be satisfied only by frankly recognising a new fact: that an inner circle of defence arrangements is being formed within the broader circle of Commonwealth associations, a nuclear club within the political club" (22.6.57).

When we consider the idyllic picture of the Commonwealth and the mythical bonds which allegedly hold it together that is commonly presented to the public it would seem strange that such an outrageous suggestion as the use of Commonwealth territories for the purpose of nuclear warfare by one of its members should even be made. Yet the attitude of the *Daily Telegraph* has a basis in the original purpose of the institution.

When at Queen Victoria's first jubilee in 1887 all the Prime Ministers of what were then the self-governing colonies were assembled in London they were invited to the first conference of this kind. Lord Salisbury, the Queen's Prime Minister, explained that the purpose was "to form neither a general union nor a *Zollverein*" (customs union) "but a *Kriegsverein*" (war alliance), "a combination for purposes of self-defence".

If the choice of the Bismarckian phrases was congenial to the times of unashamed empire building, the term "nuclear club" might be regarded as an apt modernisation of the English translation. At all events, Mr. Macmillan must be regarded as the heir of the Salisbury tradition of the expansion of England, the Commonwealth and the Empire. For he was first inflicted on the British people as Prime Minister not as the result of a general election but through the medium of that august institution, the Privy Council, which has a membership of several hundred but a *quorum of only three*, and the man who carried the day against the wishes even of his own party was none other than the present Marquess of Salisbury.

Commonwealth base for nuclear strike

The problem of turning the Commonwealth into a base for the nuclear strike would have daunted any man of less expansionist ambition than Mr. Macmillan possesses. He had, into the bargain, two close associates of the same persuasion whom he appointed to key positions over the heads of men whom his party thought more deserving of high office. Mr. Duncan Sandys became Minister of Defence, Lord Home Minister for Commonwealth relations. In themselves these appointments show the intimate relationship between the new strategy and the reliance on the Commonwealth as its base.

All through 1957 the "danger" of peaceful co-existence was becoming more and more acute. "Disengagement" was in the air, and the year 1958 opened with the exchange of friendly letters between Mr. Khrushchov and President Eisenhower which portended a rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the U.S.S.R.

Simultaneously, and it appears somewhat precipitately, Mr. Macmillan announced his plans for touring the Commonwealth members of the Indian ocean area.

Towards the end of the trip, on February 5th, he made a speech in Melbourne which in retrospect is seen to have had more than ordinary significance. The *Manchester Guardian* headed its report of it "Going it alone". In it Mr. Macmillan said:

"I believe it is in the interests of the whole free world that Britain should have the authority that comes with being a first-class nuclear power. But we do not wish to make all the various types of nuclear weapons which are being and will be evolved. We do not wish to compete with the United States in developing an endless succession of ever more elaborate weapons. . . ."

British forces, he said, might become engaged in operations—either police [sic.] operations such as in Kenya, or a limited war such as in Korea—in which for a time at any rate they might be engaged alone. The naval forces east of Suez would be a task force consisting of a carrier and supporting forces based on Singapore "capable, if need arises, of acting alone". This did not exclude a major war in south-east Asia in which Britain would be acting with S.E.A.T.O. countries.

Apparently fortified by the success of his journey, he already felt in the position to utter this open challenge to the United States, in case President Eisenhower should wish to go "too far" in his negotiations with the Soviet Union, and at the same time to claim the Indian Ocean as a British lake, with all the strategic advantages of the inner position.

Mr. Macmillan rounded his speech off with a remark which betrayed the drift of his talks in India. The Commonwealth's task, he said, was to counter not only military aggression but political and economic penetration and *to prevent uncommitted countries from going over to the Communist camp.* There was a part to play by Commonwealth countries which had decided not to join military groupings. *India, above all, could exert powerful influence over uncommitted countries.*

This speech may well be said to mark a turning point in the affairs of the Commonwealth. From this time onwards Britain's hold on the Commonwealth countries slowly but steadily increased.

Lord Salisbury used the threat of German expansion and gunboat diplomacy to weld the self-governing colonies into the *Kriegsverein*; Mr. Macmillan is using the fear of Communism and the diplomacy of the aircraft carrier to keep the Commonwealth together and expand the nuclear club.

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But the temper of feeling against the menace of nuclear war is such that he has to walk very warily. To what extent even the leading statesmen of some of the Commonwealth countries are aware of all the implications of the Macmillan-Sandys-Home strategy can only be surmised.

An example of the length to which the concealment of its true purposes can be carried by the use of the obscure military slang in which words take on the meaning of their opposite were the negotiations over the Cyprus base. During the whole course of these protracted talks the word "nuclear" was not whispered once. Was the British side trusting that by now everyone concerned would have forgotten that the 1957 White Paper provided for bomber squadrons based on Cyprus capable of delivering nuclear weapons?

Africa the key link

This kind of deception has been tried very hard in Kenya, but without conspicuous success. Mr. Blundell, hailed as "Blundell of Kenya" only a short eighteen months ago, receded into the limbo of forgotten things once he made the establishment of a British base—no mention of nuclear purposes—part of his programme. Press attempts are now being made to resurrect him, and all mention of the base is being studiously avoided. Lord Mountbatten, just arrived in Kenya, made a point of assuring his first press conference that he had come "with no nuclear bases up my sleeve".

African opinion has been thoroughly alarmed at the underhand way in which, in spite of such gratuitous assurances, the military build-up in Kenya has been progressing during the past year, particularly the use of Nairobi's civil airport for the Vulcan flights. Kenya's experiences of the British military have been too searing ever to be forgotten, from the time when Colonel Meinertzhagen gratified his bloodlust there to the days of Captain Griffiths.

There is no chance of African resistance to foreign military bases on the soil of their continent ever being broken, either in Kenya or in other parts of Africa. On this point feeling in Nigeria, for instance, is so strong that during the last constitutional negotiations in May the British side was forced to disclaim all intentions of establishing a base there. Not even the proposed "Defence agreement", which involved such innocent sounding arrangements as the "mutual (!) granting of staging points" could be got through before independence. And after independence it will have to be published, discussed and laid before the Nigerian Parliament. Mr. Macmillan himself does not rate the chances of it passing this public scrutiny very high, if one may judge by his appointment of Mr. Antony Head as British High Commissioner in the Federation of Nigeria, together with the award of a Viscountcy.

But this appointment is a shrewd move. The former Defence Minister is an opponent of the nuclear strategy, and as such found no place in Macmillan's cabinet. In his letter of appointment Mr. Macmillan offered him the plums of future office as an inducement if he acquitted himself well of his delicate task. "This post in Lagos in one to which I attach cardinal importance for the future," the letter says. ". . . I feel that with your wisdom and experience the United Kingdom High Commission in Lagos could exert a decisive and favourable influence. . . ."

It is a measure of the vital importance of Africa to the nuclear strategy. For it is all very well to talk of mobility and dispersal, of permanently airborne bombers, of re-fuelling them in flight, of aircraft carriers perambulating the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean—still there remains the problem of the material base on solid ground from which alone any war machine can be fed. The huge continental mass of Africa, on the west of the Indian Ocean, containing all the raw materials of nuclear war, is the indispensable base for the nuclear strike across the Indian Ocean and its land-link with the Atlantic.

How clearly these considerations are in the minds of the nuclear strategists was shown on the occasion of an African Regional Road Congress held in Salisbury, Rhodesia, at the end of May 1957. Sir Ernest Guest, former Rhodesian Defence Minister, was the chairman, and it discussed the construction of a strategic highway stretching from Cape Town to Kenya, a distance of 3,500 miles, as the first step in realising the long debated plans for the "defence" of Africa south of the Sahara, at a cost of £28 million. The *Daily Telegraph* of June 5th, 1957, reported that "it was explained to member countries as a tourist project".

The disguise was, however, more than usually thin. The *Telegraph* correspondent went on: "There is no doubt it corresponds with the strategic concept of linking the two largest White communities in Africa. Also it is in line with the staff talks which Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, had recently in London and in South Africa. . . . 'South Africa's Pan-African defence schemes,' says the *Rhodesian Northern News*, 'are based on the belief that North-Eastern Africa, marked by a line Morocco to Kenya, would be one of the main battle grounds and that Southern Africa must be a base for the West. This would involve a radar screen across the Equator and undertakings for mutual aid, supplies of arms and technicians and a unified command'."

According to *The Times*, too, the "strategic, industrial and commercial value of a trunk-road from Cape Town to Nairobi was emphasised by delegates and observers" at the Salisbury conference.

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"Sir Charles Markham, a member of the Council of the East African Road Federation, said that the strategic value of a heavy duty road could not be ignored. 'What is more, loyalty plus ten per cent is a very good way of getting people to pay for the road' " (May 29th). "The importance of a road link across the Middle of Africa to give access to west coast ports in case of emergency was emphasised at the last session of the African regional road conference" (June 1st).

There was just one factor that the planners left out of account. It never occurred to them that there might be a revolution in the heart of Africa. The Congo "crisis" is in reality the crisis of the nuclear strategy.

Towards the nuclear strike

What will the outcome of that crisis be? It would be an error to underestimate the determination of Mr. Macmillan's nuclear strategists or the resourcefulness of the Macmillan-Sandys-Home trio which is at the helm of British affairs.

In the short three years since the publication of the 1957 White Paper methodical, relentless progress has been made with the execution of the "Five-Year Defence Plan", as it was described in 1959. The Army, Navy and Air Force have been streamlined for their job as purveyors of nuclear death.

Since the modernised aircraft carrier *Victorious* rejoined the Navy amid a blaze of publicity by press, radio, TV and film as "the latest thing in aircraft carriers", all the Navy's carriers have been modernised to the same pattern, except *Bulwark*, which has been converted into a commando carrier. The carrier task force of which it forms part is deployed "east of Suez"—at present off the coast of Kenya.

According to the White Papers, the "strategic" (i.e. nuclear) bomber force has been built up and the performance of the bombers is said to be unsurpassed as regards speed and altitude, the precision of the navigational aids and bomb-aiming equipment.

In addition to the growing stock of kiloton bombs, the production of British megaton weapons has been proceeding steadily. Important technical advances have been made in the design of nuclear warheads permitting a significant increase in the rate of production. The *Blue Steel* stand-off bombs have proved so efficient that the vulnerable, stationary *Blue Streak* has been given up (without any tears, except from Mr. Gaitskell).

Tiger class cruisers, advanced conventional submarines, the first nuclear submarine *Dreadnought* and the first guided missile destroyer *Devonshire*, armed with *Seaslug* and *Seacat* ship-to-air guided missiles, are under construction, and a production order for *N.A.39 strike aircraft* has been placed. And by 1964 or 1965 the Anglo-American *Skybolt*, which can be launched from the air at a distance of more than a thousand miles from target, should be available (a military authority speaking over the B.B.C. recently described it as "a fascinating project"). This nuclear missile can be delivered by the *Vulcans*, the take-off performance of which is being improved; they will be able to fly further and at greater heights, and measures will be taken to make it operationally easier to deploy them overseas.

In 1959-60 nearly £6 million were spent on accommodation for troops overseas, and in 1960-61 this is to be stepped up to £10 million, the major projects being the expanding bases around the Indian Ocean, in Kenya, Malaya and Aden, and on the way there, in Gibraltar, Libya and Cyprus. British Army units, warships and bombing planes can travel in easy stages by the western or northern routes, or via the islands directly across that British Lake. In the language of the latest White Paper:

"Against the continuing Communist military threat the defence of the free world rests on a complex of collective security alliances. Great Britain plays her part in N.A.T.O., C.E.N.T.O. and S.E.A.T.O., and in addition provides a military presence to help preserve stability in politically sensitive areas for which she has a particular responsibility."

In Mr. Macmillan's silver tongue this becomes: "When I left for Paris I was fortified by the knowledge that I had behind me the whole weight of the free and independent Commonwealth" (address to women Conservatives in the Albert Hall on June 2nd). He was referring to his part in the breakdown of the Summit Conference.

Mr. Macmillan cannot have it both ways forever. The "wind of change" has a way of being unpredictable. In June he still felt sufficiently confident to tell an audience of Norwegian students: "like skilful helmsmen we can make use of the wind". That was before the events in Congo.

Now the wind of change is blowing from a new direction, from the "heart of the Commonwealth and the free world" itself. The forces of peace, democracy and progress to socialism in Britain won the first decisive victory against the nuclear strategy at the historic Trades Union Congress in Douglas. But this is only the beginning.

Much will depend on the speed with which the British people become aware that their fate rests at the moment in the hands of coolly calculating gangsters in bowler hats, who prefer death to peaceful coexistence with communism, but rather than quietly commit suicide are calmly and methodically preparing to plunge humanity into the nuclear catastrophe.

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The future of Local Government

H. Bourne

"THE industrial expansion of the nineteenth century generated appalling slums, smoky urban jungles which we are still struggling with today. Will the twentieth century leave a similar ugliness and chaos behind it? . . . Have the lessons of the nineteenth century been learned? There is a widespread anxiety that they have not. The great industrial conglomerations in the Midlands and the North are still struggling with the legacy of the nineteenth century as they are gradually engulfed in the problems of the twentieth."

Thus the Sunday *Observer* in a series of recent articles significantly entitled "Must Britain be a Mess?" Its editorial comment is revealing on the basic causes of this "widespread anxiety", which is being expressed from many bourgeois sources today: "Yet they (the Conservatives) must see that unless these problems can be solved soon, in a sensible and democratic way, there is a risk of a widespread reaction later and a demand for the very kind of ruthless centralised planning (such as the nationalisation of land) which they most dislike."

What a commentary on right-wing Labour's main line of attack on socialism as "out of date", when the capitalists themselves show such fear about present-day political reality with its basic necessity for socialist control and planning.

British capitalism's fundamental contradictions are being revealed very sharply in all main questions concerning local government today. In this sphere, questions of capitalist state policy, monopoly control of land and resources, and the people's aspirations for a better life, are coming into headlong clashes. That is why the work and proposals of the Local Government Boundaries Commission, now proceeding in the country, are of such considerable importance to the whole Labour movement today. It would be a mistake to consider them secondary and trivial questions, a matter of just redrawing lines on maps or of the transfer of one or other locality between various local authorities.

The fact is that the structure and administrative boundaries of our councils are hopelessly out of date in relation to the present-day economic and social realities in Britain. In essence, there has been no change in the boundaries and structure since the 1888's basic pattern, which gives us today forty-nine county councils and eighty county boroughs as England's main local government authorities. Yet since that time, and especially after the first world war, there have been very great social and economic changes in population, location of industry, growth of towns and communications. A chaotic and unreal position has resulted from the failure to make corresponding changes in council structure.

Archaic Boundaries

The county councils, each with equal powers, range from populations of two-and-a-quarter million to 18,000, and their boundaries, based originally on the medieval shires, have scarcely changed. Towns with equal powers as county borough councils have as low a population as 25,000 and as great as one-and-a-quarter million. The greatest change over the years has been the concentration of great masses of industry and population in six or seven great "conurbations" such as the West Midlands and greater Manchester, on the same lines as the greater London sprawl. In the absence of any basic changes, the local administration of these "great wens" is today chaotically divided amongst many local authorities in the most haphazard, inefficient and wasteful manner. Big developments have further taken place with the growth of dormitory towns all over the country, the spread of new housing estates, ribbon development, and finally in new large scale techniques and methods for manufacture and distribution of the main public utilities such as gas and electricity.

In Professor W. A. Robson's words: "The local government boundaries have lost any significance they must once have possessed: they now appear often merely lines drawn at random on a continuous built-up area." All these changes imperatively demand local government reform but nothing has been done.

The inevitable result from this ever-growing discrepancy is ever-growing conflict and unbearable strains between the local authorities of all kinds. This conflict takes many forms. e.g., town borough councils under the control of a county council, pressing continuously to obtain the more independent and stronger status of county boroughs; diffi-

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culties of the county councils when the richest rating areas within their limits are county boroughs outside their control; and above all, the conflcts between the "giants" i.e. the main town county boroughs (largely in Labour control) and the surrounding county councils (mostly in Tory hands) over questions of overspill, land development, Green Belt and the extension of boundaries. The problems are seen at their sharpest within the great "conurbations" where the hopelessly divided administration shows itself in a lack of comprehensive planning, co-ordination and administration of overall services, paralleled only by the anarchy and chaos of capitalist production itself.

And now, the problem of the mass use of the motor vehicle has arrived in a deluge. Just to cope with the present traffic will obviously require the reconstruction of the road system of whole areas and towns where daily jams are locking cities solid. The problem of 12 million vehicles on the roads within a few years (Mr. Marples' estimate) boggles the imagination. No wonder that from all quarters today—including from high capitalist circles themselves—is coming a flood of the most critical questioning, protests and angry demands for something to be done.

The attack on Local Government

Every British government since the thirties has been faced with these ever-growing problems, and the necessity to make a radical reorganisation of the structure and boundaries of local government as an important step in beginning to cope with these problems. But all, Tory and Labour alike, have refused to grasp the nettle, but instead pursued a line of policy which in practice has struck still heavier blows at the function and power of local government, while in no way solving the problems themselves. Continuously since 1934, the central Government has been setting up regional organisations of one kind or another to administer those services which obviously require wide areas for efficient administration. But the bodies are nationally appointed, the services have been taken out of the hands of local authorities and the administration is immune from any direct democratic control. Bureaucratic and undemocratic tendencies in the work of these boards have inevitably developed, the interests of industry and commerce become paramount in all their considerations, and working class interests and rights have been increasingly trodden down. This process started with the 1934 Unemployment Assistance Board Act, and was followed by major trunk roads going into the control of the Ministry of Transport in 1936. After the war, when regional commissioners with dictatorial powers operated, the Labour Government, instead of reversing this process, carried it still further with gas, electricity, the hospitals and rating valuation, all taken out of the hands of local authorities and given to regional boards.

But these bureaucratic regional bodies, even when appointed by Labour Governments, cannot overcome the crisis of local government but only intensify it. The problems grew worse. Something had to be done. In 1945, therefore, the first Local Government Boundaries Commission was set up by the Coalition Government, and endorsed by the Labour Government. Its powers, however, were strictly limited to making proposals for altering the boundaries and status of the local authorities only within the limits of "no change" for the county council and county borough system. It obviously could produce no solution in this setting and said so in its Second Annual Report in 1948, asking instead for powers to make a much bigger change, i.e., to replace the 129 major local authorities (the eighty county borough and forty-nine county councils) by sixty-seven new county councils. There are limited merits in this proposal but it provides no real overall solution to the problems. Nevertheless this was too bold for the Government and the Commission was wound up in 1949.

The Communist Solution

The Communist Party had issued a detailed Memorandum on this Commission's Report and its views and proposals attracted widespread favourable comment. The document, titled "The Future of Local Government", after a historical survey of the causes of the crisis in local government and a criticism of the Commission's own proposals, gave an alternative solution to the problem which has not been convincingly answered from any quarter. The ten years which have elapsed have served only to reinforce the correctness of those proposals and the urgent need to put them into effect. In essence they were for a system of directly elected regional councils as top-tier authorities, with new enlarged district and urban councils as second-tier authorities.

The key is the democratic regional councils, for only a system of this kind can bring the rapidly growing regional bureaucracies under democratic control, solve the pressing problems of the big "conurbations", eliminate the traditional conflicts beween county councils and county borough councils, and provide local authorities sufficiently powerful to stand up to Whitehall. These regional councils would be based on main areas of the country which have common economic interests and traditional social and political associations. The populations would be at least 1 million and in some cases very much larger, and some twenty-five regions would be necessary.

These councils would administer democratically

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those services which can only be effectively run by one authority over a wide area, recovering in the process those services recently "lost" to local authority, and would bring about the best possible planning, development and co-ordination of all services in the area. It would have regional power over major town and country planning, all "overspill" problems, the location and building of new towns, location of industry, govern the all-region health and hospital services including teaching hospitals, higher technical and technological education, road passenger services, water, fire and main sewage. The major trunk roads would come under its authority and also gas and electricity distribution.

It can be seen that these are absolutely vital powers for a region, but at the same time the dangers of remoteness and lack of response to local needs which the size of such a council brings, is a problem that must be overcome. This is done in the structure and powers of the second tier authorities. The aim here is to establish authorities which could be called borough councils or district councils according to whether they were mainly rural or urban in character but would be large enough to undertake many more functions than at present. Whilst many existing borough councils and county borough councils would remain as at present with populations even up to Birmingham's one-and-a-quarter million, most of the reorganised and amalgamated new councils would have a population of say 60,000 to 100,000 minimum, effective for financial functioning.

It would be important in forming them to ensure that urban and rural districts are united in order to lessen the artificial separation of town and country which prevails today. They would have considerably strengthened powers, for many of the services which have now been lost to regional boards or county councils, would be restored. Their administration of services would range over housing, primary, second and further education, local hospital management, local planning and development, roads, trading activities, health centres and welfare of old people and children, with police powers in large boroughs. This reorganisation would mean the abolition of the present county councils or rather their merger into the regional councils, and likewise the present county boroughs would become borough councils subordinate to the regional council.

The grave financial problems of local government were faced boldly in the Memorandum, calling for the levying of a local income tax as the only way to provide a source of revenue which would place the main burden of local taxation on the rich. In the meantime, while such a major change in local government finance is being introduced, the Communist Party proposes immediate financial reforms in the shape of the total abolition of industrial derating, the partial rating of agriculture, the rating of site values, reduction of loan interest rates to 2 per cent, the abolition of the block grant and, instead, higher grants with no increase in centralised control.

The democratic character of local government should also be further strengthened by a number of other changes, whereby Aldermen would be abolished, all citizens over eighteen would have the vote, public ward meetings made compulsory for the accounting of Councillors to their electorate, the enlargement and strengthening of parish council democracy etc.

These radical solutions were rejected by the Commission and the Government in 1949. But the problems remained and increasingly demanded attention. In 1956, the Government published a White Paper on the Area and Status of Local Authorities in England and Wales, although the conclusion was reached once more that "there was no convincing case for radically changing the existing form of local authorities and what was needed was to make improvements to bring the system up to date."

Back to a Commission

From this came the Local Government Act of 1958 which set up two Local Government Commissions for England and Wales to review local government organisation (except in London, for which a Royal Commission had already been set up). By 1962, Parliament will have to consider and take decisions on the Commission's proposals.

Of some democratic value are the provisions for all interested bodies to give their views at local conferences on the proposals, before they come before the Ministry of Housing, and also that public enquiries may be held before final action. All sections of the Labour movement have therefore valuable opportunities to state their criticisms and proposals, and these opportunities should be utilised to the utmost. The only new feature which in any way could be called a step towards a radical solution was the power given to the Commission in their investigation of the five "Special Review Areas", i.e., the great "conurbations" of Tyneside, Merseyside, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and South East Lancashire. They are here allowed to propose the creation of a new kind of local government structure altogther, i.e., a "Continuous County" with a special distribution of functions. This was immediately seen by the press as the Regional Council idea and there were headlines "A West Midlands Super-Council".

The Commission started its work in 1959 on the West and East Midlands. This article deals only with its work in the former area.

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In the West Midlands it is covering two Review Areas; (1) A General Review Area embracing all the five counties of Staffordsihre, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire, but excepting Birmingham and the Black Country (the "conurbation") which is the subject of (2) the Special Review Area. An ominous note was struck from the outset by the Commission Chairman's statement: "The Commission were entering their task with no preconceived ideas. . . . They would no doubt meet the British tradition of Conservatism about Local Government and it was well to remember that the county boundaries had been much the same for 1,000 years" (!)

At work in the West-Midlands

All the problems confronting British local government can be seen in a classic form in the West Midlands, especially in the "conurbation". The Black Country is one of the oldest areas in Britain, and stretches north and west of Birmingham over to Wolverhampton, together with these cities embracing an area of over 100 square miles. It is today a sad monument to the rapacious greed and anarchic development of capitalist exploitation. Factories, foundries, derelict workings, waste land and ruins of industrial buildings, slag heaps, acres of old Victorian slum housing interspersed with new housing estates, roads, railways and canals all mixed up in one great tangle without beginning or end until open country is reached on the perimeter.

Tremendous wealth has been sucked out of the area by the industrialists past and present, and only the barest minimum put back by them in public works and amenities. What was once one of the loveliest parts of England is truly a "black country", in spite of the heroic efforts of thousands of Labour movement workers and good work on the councils over many years; 2,300,000 people live and work in this vast urban sprawl including Birmingham, and their living and social conditions are administered by no fewer than twenty-seven different local authorities, a mixture of county boroughs, boroughs and urban and district councils of all shapes and sizes, many of the latter coming under the neighbouring Staffordshire or Worcestershire County Councils.

Birmingham itself has grown enormously, especially since the post-war vast expansion of the motor and allied industries, and is veritably bursting at the seams. There has been a great growth of dormitory areas and subsidiary centres over a twenty-mile radius, and this growth, largely unplanned and uncontrolled, is the main cause of its heavy burden of problems as Britain's second city. It is in constant conflict with the surrounding three county councils of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire over land acquisition and Green Belt; it negotiates with over 100 local authorities in England and in Wales for the reception of its "overspill" population: it conducts a running fight with the Government over the need and financing of a new town; there is a 65,000 waiting list for houses, and yet industry is still streaming into the "boom" city.

These problems are not so acute in the General Review Area (rest of the five counties) with the exception of the Stoke-on-Trent Borough Council, embracing the Potteries whose "war" with the Staffordshire County Council is of long standing. There are problems, however, of another order, such as the low level of social services in many of the rural areas and in smaller towns with low rating incomes (mainly dominated by Tory councils), while all the councils suffer from the general constriction of local government powers by the central Government.

The Commission worked for a year gathering evidence and the views of local authorities and other public bodies including political parties. As was to be expected from such an "each man for himself" set-up, each local authority sought to safeguard its own council's interest with little regard for the solution of the main overall problems that have been outlined. The five county borough councils of the Black Country, Walsall, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Dudley and Wolverhampton saw the answer in swallowing up their small urban and district council neighbours. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire County Councils bitterly resent such claims on their highest rated territories, and propose instead amalgamation of existing district councils within their area into larger units. Birmingham Council, as the hub of the whole area with the greatest responsibility for a progressive solution, failed to do anything more than lay claim for more land for building on its south borders from the Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils.

Local Labour movement views

The only bodies putting forward comprehensive plans for meeting the overall problems of the area were the Midlands District Committee and West Midlands Regional Council respectively of the Communist and Labour Parties. The former's proposals were on the lines of the Communist Party's national Memorandum and visualised a Regional Council with Birmingham as its natural centre, which should cover at least the entire "conurbation" and saw good reason why the regional area could well cover the entire West Midlands five-county area. The circulation of copies of this district memorandum to all local authorities and Labour movement bodies in the Midlands was well received, and reports came in of its public use

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in discussions in several of these organisations.

In view of the Labour Government's rejection of the 1948 Commission's proposals, the Labour Regional Council's line came as a surprise. They were for the two-tier system, with a West Midlands Regional Authority responsible for planning, transport, police and higher education, and with second tier authorities having "most-purpose" powers and equalised in size and population. Much of their analysis, reasoning and proposals for new functions paralleled the approach of the Communist Party. Undoubtedly, the first-hand experience of the problems encountered by over 400 Labour Councillors on the councils of this area, have helped to bring about this more realistic attitude. Unfortunately their case is marred by a failure to see the vital necessity of strengthening democracy in their proposed Regional administration, for they propose that their Regional Authority should not be directly elected, but instead made up of nominated members from the lower authorities. In a typically hypocritical comment, the West Midland Tory Agent condemned this as a "Big Brother" plan, a complete negation of democracy etc.

The Commission's proposals

The printed proposals of the Commission issued in March 1960 showed that once again the main issues were being buried. In the General Review Area, some adjustments of boundaries of the most trifling kind were the main things recommended and as a consequence, at the public conferences held in various towns of the area, hours were wasted over the "ownership" of one tiny parish or another! The Communist Party representatives at the Stafford and Coventry conferences took the opportunity of restating their proposals for radical change. When the Commission's chairman objected on grounds of "lack of powers", he was reminded that his predecessor of the 1948 Commission had condemned the limited powers given his body and had put forward instead the sixty-seven counties proposals as their view of what should be done "if they had power"!

It was a somewhat different kettle of fish with the Commission's proposals for the Special Area, the Birmingham and Black Country "conurbation". At least some of the chronic facts had to be faced. A certain recognition of the realities emerged through the polite understatements:

> "Local Government in this area as a whole is not as effective and convenient as it could be. . . . Many of the boundaries have little meaning in present day conditions. Their structure . . . results in delay, inconvenience and frustration. It is clear . . . that Birmingham will have a continuing need to 'overspill' beyond the Green Belt. . . . Since so many people live in one part of the review area and work in another, the practical problems of moving population and industry from different authorities' areas, call for some common machinery to act for all of them. . . . The Commission also considered the question of a planning Authority covering both the Area and those parts of the adjoining counties most affected by its problems".

But instead of taking the bold plunge for the only logical solution, i.e. the Regional Council system, they shied off once more and categorically rejected this, using the most unconvincing of arguments: "They decided that it (a continuous county) would not be justified in the circumstances of this area, having regard in particular to the small number of services which would benefit materially and to the position and size of the existing all-purpose authorities". These "small number of services" so contemptuously rejected are, of course, the vital overall area planning, administration and co-ordinating powers!

Instead, the Commission left Birmingham as a one-tier county borough council and proposed grouping the rest of the twenty-odd Black Country councils into six new county borough councils, enlarged from the existing ones and with populations ranging from 150,000 to 250,000. Their only concession to the idea of regional administration of a democratic kind was to propose an ill-defined "overspill" authority for the whole area and a joint board for area sewage.

Battle commences

Nevertheless, in spite of the extremely limited nature of these proposals, a tremendous furore broke out in many parts of the area. Several councils found a part of their worst fears realised in the proposals, i.e., that some would lose their semi-independent status, as with certain urban districts of the Black Country, and others, as Staffordshire County Council, would lose valuable rating areas to the new enlarged county borough councils. Town meetings were urgently summoned, many with packed audiences, petitions and protests organised, and in one case in the Black Country an "Independent movement" was set up. It is not reported that this has reached the stage of guerilla fighting!

The imagined threats to local interests in another Black Country town, Bilston, saw a political truce declared by Tory and Labour at the council elections, in order the better to combat the "common enemy", i.e. merger into an enlarged Wolverhampton County Borough Council!

Behind much of this agitation in many areas clearly lay the fears of local business and commercial interests with well worked out and profitable connections with the local council. Such snug

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arrangements might be rudely disturbed by merger into larger areas where other business interests were well entrenched. At the same time, a widespread and strongly expressed feeling for the preservation of local identity and "patriotism", a feeling of warm attachment to community life round traditional localities, was clearly revealed in the meetings and press. This is not to be ignored, for it can serve as an important basis to secure mass understanding of the Communist Party's radical solution to the main problems. It must be said that all too little use was made of these opportunities in the West Midlands.

The main public Conferences in Birmingham and Wolverhampton to discuss the proposals were well attended, and again the Communist representatives were able to present their views, which were listened to with considerable interest and noted in the press. There were even some slight signs of rethinking by the Commission, as in a question by the Chairman to a Council representative. "Suppose we decided to abandon the county borough plan and prefer some form of two-tier government. . . .?" The contestants now relapse into an uneasy peace, awaiting the Commission's final deliberations, probably some time next year, when they are put to the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

In the interim, the Communist Party's proposals should continue to be publicised with great vigour, for it is indicative of the pressing nature of the problems and the realistic nature of our proposals that critical views along similar lines are coming forward from many quarters:

> "All the major controversial problems involving land values, urban development, motorways, industrial location and the preservation of the countryside, are basically problems of land use. Land use planning can only be effective if considered on a regional basis". (H. F. Clarke, President of the Institute of Landscape Architects' letter to *The Times*, 11.7.60).

The Times itself, in an editorial comment on the Commission's proposals, writes (3.3.60):

> "It is not easy to understand from the Commission's brief supporting arguments, why, if the case for an area authority for overspill was accepted, it was not accepted for other extra-local functions, such as police, fire, major planning, and technical education. Acceptance would, of course have led straight to the idea of a continuous county, for a plethora of ad hoc authorities is destructive of intelligible representative Government."

In its editorial, significantly entitled "The Mess", the Sunday *Observer* says (19.6.60):

> "What is wanted is a new approach which will try to co-ordinate the siting of industry, the planning of new towns, the building of new roads and the preservation of the countryside in one comprehensive plan. If it is considered impractical or dangerous to do this on a national level, the Government should consider whether it could not devise regional authorities which could plan for all the large areas affected by one urban conglomeration, like the Midlands or Clydeside or the south-east of England. Unfortunately this approach seems to have been rejected by the Royal Commission now studying local government, and admittedly it has political difficulties; but it should appeal to Conservatives who see the need for escaping from local pressure yet fear the extension of central government."

Socialism the main answer

Naturally, such proposals from capitalist circles, though reflecting the inescapable nature of the problems, will strive to confine any reforms in the most undemocratic limits. The Labour movement on the other hand, in its approach, must go far beyond the limits of capitalist need and in the first place, place its greatest emphasis on the democratic content of any changes, seeking to secure the widest extension of democratic control and rights for the people.

Most important of all, however, there should be no illusions that even an advanced outcome of local government reform, along the lines of the Communist Party's proposals, can do more than provide some amelioration of the worst effects of capitalist anarchic development in this field. "Playing with plans" while economic and state power is still in capitalist hands, is a danger that Socialists must always avoid. The main benefit of successfully putting these proposals into effect, would be to give the Labour movement a much more favourable and advantageous position in the sphere and on the issues of local government, in order to raise the fundamental need for socialist ownership and control. There can be no real solution under capitalism of Britain's colossal and growing problems of housing, industrial re-location, town and country planning, and major redevelopment. Only when a socialist government has nationalised all the urban land, the great building and building material firms, the banks, insurance and financial companies, can there be any real change and real grappling with the problems.

But great sections of the working class; great numbers of Labour Councillors and active Labour workers, vitally concerned with inadequate social services and inefficient and out-of-date council administration, do not yet see the need for these fundamental social changes. Even when they do understand this need in principle, as in the splendid Clause 4 movement, they are still far from grasping the need for developing the mass struggle in every way, for constant socialist campaigning, strengthening and uniting the movement and above

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all for the very considerable growth of communist organisation, in short, understanding what must be done to win socialist power.

There are also today thousands of most able and conscientious local government officials, professional men and women, town planners, architects, artists, in fact more and more people from all sections of the population, who are equally dismayed and appalled at the growing chaos and lack of overall planning in Britain. There is deep frustration in these circles at the cynical way in which the post-war plans for a better and more beautiful Britain, on which so much valuable and painstaking work was lavished, have been so rudely sacrificed to the interests of the Tory land speculators, property firms and armament manufacturers.

This frustration must be transformed into an understanding that the problems can only be solved by fundamental socialist solutions, on the lines of the Communist Party's *British Road to Socialism*. That is precisely why it is of the greatest importance for the Communist Party to participate fully in all the lively controversies and struggles around the questions of the reform of local government.

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How did Man originate?

Karl Sacher

TODAY, one hundred years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, the controversy over Darwinism is raging unabatedly. Of course the tactics of those whose conception of the world does not allow them to believe in man's descent from apes have become more supple and their weapons more intricate. They no longer denounce science as a whole as *the* enemy, but they exploit its weaknesses and difficulties.

The German anatomist *Virchow*—an adversary of Darwinism, but a scientist who respected facts—once said in the Prussian Parliament (of which he was a deputy) when speaking about the theory of descent that, should science be able conclusively to prove the animal descent of man, even the Church would have to knuckle under (*One Hundred Years of Darwinism*, Report to the Conference, Leipzig-Jena, 1959, p. 23). As it happens, scientists have in the last decades dug up numerous fossil bones, which without doubt had belonged to anthropomorpha (human apes) with the beginning of human traits, or to hominida with remnants of simian characteristics. Finally, in 1950, Pope Pius XII conceded with his encyclical "Humani generis" that man, as far as his "bodily shape" is concerned is descended from animal ancestors—yet the Pope continued to insist on the divine origin of the human soul.

This attitude is facilitated by the fact that it is getting progressively more difficult to explain *how* modern man originated, the more proofs we are producing *that* he originated from the realm of animals. And the theologists get their greatest support from those—unfortunately numerous and influential—scientists who endeavour, under the pressure of these difficulties, to pre-date the origin of the human species and place it in as distant a geological era as possible.

For the earlier one places humanisation the more difficult it becomes to prove the animal descent of man scientifically, the easier it becomes to theologists to twist the *natural* history of creation in the direction of the *biblical* history. For if human reason [which, when all is said and done, constitutes the main distinguishing mark of *Homo sapiens* ("reason-endowed man") not only with regard to animals but also with regard to his half-animal-like immediate ancestors] cannot be proved to be the final result of a lengthy development of its physical organ, the cerebrum (upper main part of the brain), then it might be the product of a divine breath, that at one time or other was blown into an animal body, in order to constitute the immortal soul, indispensable object of every religion.

The militant adversaries of materialism are still able to find ways and means by which they can distort modern man's conception of the world, notwithstanding the fact that he is in general susceptible to the findings of science. For this they avail themselves of the *gaps* which research is not able to fill in, or which, in those countries where it vegetates under the influence of idealistic philosophy and boss-controlled patronage of science, it has so far not been able to bridge.

The Eternal Missing Link

The critics of Darwinism have always argued on this point by pretending that the facts produced by palaeontology do not confirm a continuity of the chronological order of the species. The so-called "missing link", of which already Darwin complained, has not been found to this day, and however many transitional forms have since been discovered, there always remains between them a substantial gap, which constitutes an unsurmountable obstacle to any explanation along the lines of continual evolution.

In his notes to Hegel's *Science of Logic* (*Philosophischer Nachlass* [Philosophical Notebooks], Dietz-Verlag, 1956, p. 40) *Lenin* emphasises that gradualness without leaps, i.e. without an interruption of continuity, does not explain anything. And, indeed, the embarrassment which can be produced among systematicians by the idea of a gapless transition of an extinct species into one living today, is positively amusing: on the one hand the end links of such a chain of development differ so much that the transformation of one species into another becomes obvious; on the other hand the neighbouring intermediate links in such a case are so much alike that one cannot separate them according to principles of classification. Thus, the Oxford specialist of animal classification, A. J. Cain, wrote after he had concluded that the tribal history of man had to be "reconstructed with the aid of extraordinarily incomplete material proofs": "The fragmentary character of fossil transmission has, nevertheless, one great advantage." For, if we had complete series at our disposal, then the various examples of extinct shapes, which were formerly regarded as "good species" (i.e. biological units which do not interbreed with other units) "could

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no longer so easily be declared as such, for they would have to be regarded as successive stages of one and the same evolutionary process" (*Die Tierarten und ihre Entwicklung* [Animal Species and their Development], Jena, 1959, p. 142).

In reality new finds not only in no way eliminate the fragmentary character of transmission, but—quite logically—enhance it. For, as soon as an intermediary shape is found the question of its concrete transition from the starting point to the intermediary stage and from there to the final stage is raised. Willy-nilly Engels' words come to one's mind: "It does not alter the case that intermediate links can be found between the separate groups. . . . These intermediate links prove only that there is no leap in nature, precisely because nature is composed entirely of leaps" (*Dialectics of Nature*, International Publishers, New York, 1940, pp. 281-287).

Fragmentariness is unavoidable, "flowing transitions" are impossible, for every living being represents in itself an independent system, whose separate parts correspond to each other and act together as one whole. If the French palaeontologist G. Cuvier, who established the law of correlation or mutual dependence of the single organs, came to the conclusion that the development of one species out of another one was an impossibility, then Darwin, in his controversy with Cuvier and other partisans of an absolute discontinuity between the species, allowed himself to be led to the opposite extreme when he advocated—while pointing to the classical phrase "Nature does not make any leaps"—an equally absolute continuity.

However, besides the law of correlation we have another fundamental law, namely the law of the unity of the organism and its environment, which manifests itself as the driving force of all life—in the shape of assimilation and dissimilation. According to this law, each living being is not only an independent system, but also an *open system*, whose existence is bound to its specific type of metabolism with its environment.

Therefore those who do not wish to return to Cuvier's cataclysm-theory (which, by the way, many anti-Darwinists are doing) are obliged to acknowledge that the changeability of the species, as taught by Darwin, depends on the changing environment; at the same time they are obliged to give up Darwin's faulty conception of nothing but continuous transitions and to accept leap-like interruptions of evolutionary continuity.

This road has been followed by the adherents of Michurin in the Soviet Union. They start from the theorem: "The change of the hereditary nature of a living body is the result of a change in the structure of this living body, which was caused by a change in the metabolism" (T. D. Lysenko, *The Increase of the Proportion of Fat in Cow's Milk* in the journal *Agrobiologia*, 1958-6), and they "do not regard development as simple evolution, but as the budding forth of the element of a new quality in the womb of the old quality, which contradicts the latter; and in the course of this process the new quality experiences a gradual quantitative accumulation of its idiosyncrasies and forms itself, in the course of the struggle against the old quality, into a new, in principle different, entity of qualities with its own distinct law of existence" (T. D. Lysenko, *Biological Species and the Formation of Species*, Moscow, 1957, p. 8).

In the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (Vol. IX, Nos. 34 and 35) M. Grene writes, after an analysis of the differences of opinion between neo-Darwinistic and anti-Darwinistic theoreticians, of which the former one-sidedly stress continuity and the latter discontinuity, that it is necessary to replace the simple "mechanistic" logic by a logic of a different level, by a "non-unitarian" logic, in order to solve the contradiction of continuity versus discontinuity. Little does it matter that in this case the authoress is bound by a metaphysical scheme of thought—such a higher logic is indeed needed here, and it does exist: it is materialistic dialectics, which makes the contradiction full of meaning and turns it into a lever of cognition.

It is materialistic dialectics which guides Lysenko's theory of the formation of species (T. D. Lysenko, *The Species*, Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, Order of Biology and Agrarian Science, Berlin, 1953, p. 5). Maybe Lysenko's ideas will prove true also for the solution of some problems of the origin of man, as they in principle do away with the ever unavoidable "missing link".

Heredity of Acquired Characters

Of course, the adversaries of Michurin-biology also take account of discontinuities: they postulate discontinuous hereditary changes (gene mutations) as the final causes of the changes of species. Yet according to them, these mutations occur—as far as regards the relationship between organism and environment—absolutely haphazardly and independently of changes in this environment. Thus, to them, adaptation would not take place adequately to the environment absorbed by the organism, but as a statistical result of a protracted process of accumulated mutations and crossbreeding via selection, which includes isolation and fluctuations of populations, in the course of which those best fitted for life would survive while the not so well adapted forms would die out.

Only a few adherents of the gene theory among students of extinct forms of life still believe in the evolutionary effectiveness of such mutations as are

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brought about in the course of experiments with the drosophila, with the help of chemical or physical factors. For according to the law of correlation, in the vast majority of cases such forced changes within the nucleus of the germ cell or of the gametes lead to the crippling or death of the organisms. Thus Cain, a convinced adherent of the gene-theory, makes the drastic remark that the chances of such a mutation being useful are far smaller than the likelihood of improving navigation conditions by smashing the instruments of the helmsman (from the work already quoted, p. 136). As Professor J. W. Harms of Marburg, writes about the experimental hereditary research of "classical" genetics—and he is a declared protagonist—these experiments result "mostly in defect-mutations, such as a shortening of insects' wings or albinoism, i.e. not in an enhancement of organisational standards". In contrast to these discouraging experiences Harms —who explicitly calls himself an adversary of Michurin and Lysenko—points to the domestic animals, "which give us a very impressive demonstration of the changeability of the wild type as the original species", and he asserts: "In the case of domestic animals . . . we witness an enhancement of organisation and performance (for instance gigantic growth, production of eggs or milk). With the help of systematic breeding experiments, a way has been indicated here [sic!], to explore the causes of the formation of species" (*Zoobiologie für Mediziner und Landwirte* [Zoological Biology for Doctors and Agriculturists], 4th edition, Jena, 1957, p. 250).

Most neo-Darwinists who aspire to a combination of Darwin's teachings of natural selection with the gene theory of heredity, at present prefer to assume minute, unnoticeable gene mutations, which only become noticeable under certain conditions, and which are supposed to become effective in a species-forming way only in the course of very complicated happenings and after a very long space of time. Yet under normal conditions one can count on the realisation of one specific mutation only with an average of one million germ cells (A. H. Müller, *Lehrbuch der Paläozoologie* [Manual of Palaeozoology], Jena, 1957, p. 189)—keeping in mind that, for instance, according to the American geneticist and Nobel Prizewinner H. J. Muller, it took no less than one million suitable mutations before a horse-like being could come into existence. Thus it is understandable that the Soviet biologist I. T. Frolov, who accepts the gene theory in general and fights Lysenko's theories, comes to the conclusion that "this conception of ultra-selectionism" leads "in its logical consequence, to a negation of the idea of evolution" ("Zuchtwahl und Finalität", *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* [Selective Breeding and Finality, German Journal for Philosophy], IV, 1959, p. 547).

The inadequacy of this conception becomes particularly obvious when applied to the study of the descent of man. The French biologist P. Grassé, director of the Laboratoire d'Evolution des Etres Organisés of the Paris Faculté de Sciences, proves ("L'Origine de l'homme, vue par un biologiste", *Revue générale des sciences pures et appliquées*" [The Origin of Man as seen by a Biologist, Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences], Nos. 11-12, 1957) that in view of the limited number of populations the space of time taken by the process of humanisation is far too short to be able to explain the latter with the help of the statistical apparatus of "classical" genetics. According to him, moreover, the formation of the human brain, as seen in the general framework of evolution, "probably represents a more important and more revolutionary stage than the transition from the stage of the one-cell organism to that of the multi-cell organisms".

Periods of instability

Grassé surmises that there are in the history of the development of animals "periods of greater instability, in the course of which the genetic constitution is shaken by changes in environment". In the course of such crises, he writes, acquired characters could easily impress themselves on the germ cells. According to him it is likely, "that the evolutionary changes are closely tied to a certain condition of the individuals, which represent the race in those periods that we would denote as sensitive".

If the heredity of acquired characters—a theory to which in the course of an "agonising re-appraisal" some non-Michurinist geneticists have begun to turn —were to be generally accepted, the most important step to overcome the crisis which biological sciences in capitalist countries have been experiencing for some time and which has become particularly obvious in the course of the discussions of the "Darwin Year" would have been achieved.

As we know, Darwin hardly occupied himself with the exploration of the *causes* of the changes within single individuals, and he committed, as *Engels* pointed out, the mistake of making natural selection, that "rational form in which their effects [the effects of the causes—*K.S.*] became fixed . . . the sole agent in the alteration of species" (*Anti-Dühring*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 2nd edition, 1959, p. 100). In this connection Engels voiced the expectation that "further research will greatly modify our present conceptions, including strictly Darwinian ones, of the process of the evolution of species" (ibid., p. 106).

This expectation has to a great extent found its

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fulfilment in the achievements of Michurin biology, which is substantially indebted to the Marxist ideas developed by Engels on the problems of science. On the other hand, it is very remarkable that Engels, where he himself made an epoch-making contribution in the sphere of biology, steadfastly applies the very principle which constitutes the basis of Michurin biology: the heredity of acquired characters. In the article "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man" we read: "The greater flexibility thus acquired" by the hand which had become free for labour thanks to the upright gait, "was inherited and increased from generation to generation". And that "benefited also the whole body", namely "in consequence of the law of correlation of growth" as well as due to the growing urge of communicating with their fellow beings, for "the need led to the creation of its organ: the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed"; under the influence of labour and speech the human brain formed itself, a process to which "a flesh diet . . . has considerably contributed", which "contains in an almost ready state the most essential ingredients required by the organism for its metabolism" (*Dialectics of Nature*, International Publishers, New York, 1940, pp. 281-287).

Small wonder that the Soviet anthropologists, students of extinct forms of life, and ethnographers, who base themselves on Engels, have a far more solid picture of the origin of man than those of their colleagues who are cramped by bourgeois ideology. Logically thinking materialists do not doubt that the hominoid shapes, characterised by ever more numerous finds, represent successive developmental stages of the human race. Thus they all stand firmly on the point of view represented by many bourgeois scientists, like A. Hrdlicka and H. Weinert, but fought against by many prominent anthropologists like H. F. Osborn and A. Keith, of the existence of a Neanderthal-stage of the development of humanity, which succeeded the stage of pithecantropus, sinantropus, Heidelberg man and others, and out of which the present-day human type (fossil and recent *homo sapiens*) was directly descended.

After a discussion held by the Ethnographic Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1949, about the problem of the so-called *sapientation* (development of reason in man), the origin of *homo sapiens* out of neanderthaloid forms, the majority of Soviet research workers accepted the theory of "two leaps" in the history of the origin of man. The two leaps separate three stages of development: the stage of fossil human apes—like australopithicus, ramapithecus, paranthropus, etc.—that had climbed down from the trees, got free their upper extremities, and with the help of the latter more and more frequently and systematically used stones as weapon and "tool" in the struggle for life (end of the Tertiary and beginning of the Quarternary period); the stage of the first hominida or of "men in the making", after Engels (they comprise pithecantropoid forms—800,000 to 500,000 years ago—as well as the European Neanderthalers—with their climax about 100,000 years ago—and forms related to them), which began to distinguish themselves from animals by beginning to *produce* their foodstuffs (Marx-Engels, *Deutsche Ideologie* [German Ideology], Dietz-Verlag, Berlin, p. 17); and lastly the stage of "fully-fledged man" (Engels), of *homo sapiens*, who has his first representatives in the Cro-Magnon men and similar forms, who appeared 100,000 to 50,000 years ago.

Attempt at a Contribution to the Problem of Sapientation

Let us here try in brief (a detailed treatise is being prepared for publication by the author), on the basis of the achievements of Soviet experts and utilising the teachings of I. P. Pavlov and the theoretical results of Michurin biology, to employ our imagination for a concrete picture of the process of humanisation.

Humanisation was no once-occurring act. It occurred, as already said, in stages. The first, still pre-human stage, was closed by a leap in the course of which originated beings which began to carry out their metabolism with their natural environment by exercising a productive influence on the latter, and thus lifted themselves above the realm of animals. This abrupt transition, which from the point of view of anatomy found its expression above all in the humanisation of the simian hand and in a doubling of the volume of the brain, naturally took place according to the *biological* laws of the formation of the species. But at the same time it created the germ of a new set of laws, which in the course of time were bound to contradict the biological laws; for the special type of human metabolism with nature—as *Marx* calls the process of production—means that each further progress in the sense of improved adaptation to enviroment is a progress in the technique of tool-production, in the technology of the production of foodstuffs and the co-operation of men in the course of labour—i.e. all of them non-biological factors. Thus, with the fashioning of stone tools, however primitive they may have been at the beginning, a new principle of motion began to have its effect: even if the tools are in a way but a continuation of the bodily organs, their further perfection does not in principle require biological changes of the human organism.

But only in principle. The possibilities of development of the simple palaeolithic stone tool are

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relatively limited. In fact, within the half million years of the Lower Palaeolithic Age we observe only insignificant perfections of the simple flint tools. Starting from the pre-Chellean until far into the Mousterien period of Neanderthal culture we practically always find the same two types of tools: the *coups de poing*, fashioned out of the core of the raw block, to serve as an instrument for beating and hitting, and the "points", worked out of the chipped-off flakes, which were used for scraping, cutting, drilling, etc., without having been specially produced for one or the other process of work. A further development of the means of production (and likewise the transition to the more delicate flint-technique of the Neolithic Age) was only possible if, firstly, other materials (bone, bast, skins, guts, etc.) were to be used besides the unadulterated cudgel and the hard and therefore fundamental flint which was, however, at the same time brittle, and for that reason offered little possibility for fashioning by chipping alone; and secondly, by creating *combined* tools and weapons (possibly by combining the *coup de poing* with the wooden stick into an axe, or the bone-point and the stick into a spear).

The hnman brain

But that means the interpolation of further media between labour activity and essential needs, a further "detour" in the physiology of the highest nervous activity, for which the Neanderthal man was *not sufficiently fitted out* physically. Thus a new biological leap was necessitated, which had been prepared during the transitory period lasting several hundred thousand years, and which led to the formation of the purely human brain, the pre-condition of purposeful human work within an organised social group.

The work of Neanderthal man was still of a partly animal character; but it distinguished itself from the work of the beaver or the ant by basing itself less on instinct than on skills acquired through individual experience. The processes of labour were, from the point of view of brain physiology, no complicated unconditioned reflexes, neither were they conscious actions of the will as with present-day man (who creates with his hands what he had first imagined in his brain), but they were *conditioned chain reflexes*, as reactions to direct stimuli. These chain reflexes could become hereditary and change into complicated unconditional reflexes, i.e. into instincts. In that case the further road to humanisation was blocked, and it is possible that some local Neanderthal forms got caught in such a *cul-de-sac* and became extinct. But there existed the possibility that the conditioned reflexes would—owing to cumulation, increasing variety and complexity—change into a new quality. Probably this is what happened and thus was most instrumental in bringing about the leap to sapientation.

The climatic changes at the culminating point of the Glacial Age forced on the Neanderthaloid primitives a sharp change in their mode of life. The more difficult hunting conditions, the necessity of fashioning animal skins as a protection against the cold, and the instinct of the conservation of the species, led to the first natural division of labour between man and woman and thus to the beginnings of a further development of technology. The division of labour required a means of understanding which *in principle* surpassed emotional signals (as had probably already been extensively formed with Neanderthal men in the shape of elements of articulate speech). This means of understanding no longer had to signalise an inner state but an external object, and of this object not only its sensorily perceptive objectiveness, but also its generalised conceptive meaning. Thus it was imperative that the *word* had to be created as a signal of sensorily perceptive signals of the surrounding world. (According to Pavlov, the impressions gained by means of the sensory organs of the higher animals constitute the first signalling system of the surrounding world, to which man by means of speech has added a Second Signal System, which makes possible conceptive thinking and thus a deeper and more comprehensive cognition of reality.) According to I. P. Pavlov himself, the spoken word is a "*multi*-comprehensive stimulus" which in its kinesthetic form (i.e. as an irritation of cells within the cerebrum due to the motion of the organs of speech) already contains and thus replaces all the temporal connections which endowed it with meaning, owing to the individual experience of the speaker. Thus the Second Signal System becomes a completely new principle of the activity of the cortex: it makes possible an extremely economical and quick establishment of nerve-connections of unlimited variety, a boundless orientation in man's environment; it creates, as Pavlov says, the most developed form of man's biological adaptation, namely science.

One can compare the qualitative leap which is constituted by the acquisition of the Second Signal System to the revolutionary role played by the electronic valve in industrial technique, which substantially amplifies small amounts of energy, so that a heavy machine, for instance a rolling mill, can be steered by a mechanism whose level of energy is lower than that of an ordinary wireless set (N. Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, p. 144).

Human thinking

The specifically human process of thinking—physiologically speaking, thinking is nothing else but speaking to oneself—produces the very stimuli

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which are able to replace the stimuli of the surrounding world, i.e. to render possible the conscious conception of things and situations which are *not* present to the subject.

Naturally there is a structure which corresponds to this new system. And whoever observes the *essential* anatomical differences between *all* Neanderthal men and *all* forms of *homo sapiens* sees that the protruding chin (which T. Fischer and O. Walkhoff, in their articles published as early as 1903 in *Anatomischer Anzeiger* [Anatomical Advertiser], connected with the acquisition of articulated speech, as important tongue-muscles start from inside the chin), the steep forehead which is a result of the increase in the size of the frontal lobes of the brain, and the disappearance of the superciliary ridges with Cro-Magnon man are bound to be interconnected correlatively. These decisive *marks of sapientation* apparently occurred in single individuals, probably in connection with a sudden complete alteration of the biochemical processes in the brain-cells (perhaps a synthesis of new ferments acting as accelerators of those processes or a displacement of the chronological order of the existing system of ferments with the same effect). Yet, while this alteration occurred *suddenly*, it was prepared by the entire development.

It can be surmised that these radical changes took place with Neanderthal children, in whom the "conservatism" of hereditary qualities had been gradually "shaken" (by the growing contradiction between the cumulative irritability of the nerve-cells of the cerebrum and the weakly developed checking-apparatus, as well as by the transition to exogamy), and whose brain was at the most important phase of post-natal development, during which the motor centre of speech, which is situated in the frontal lobes, is being formed. Very probably such children developed uncommon intelligence when learning to speak, something that distinguished them from their contemporaries in much the same way as "mathematical prodigies" distinguished themselves from the normally-developed children of our days. Through the cumulation of such cases and selection —here sexual selection, which according to Darwin played an important role in the origin of man, may also have been of import—and in the course of a development lasting several thousand years, a development which brought with it a solidification of the newly acquired hereditary characters, the thus developed *homo sapiens* superseded Neanderthal man.

Therefore we can agree with E. Haeckel when he says that with the acquisition of articulate speech, which constitutes the decisive mark of sapientation, "the second and most important part of humanisation was brought about" (*Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* [The Natural History of Creation], vol. II, p. 733). With that the biological laws finally make way for the sociological laws, which determine the development of productive forces and production relations, in their importance for the progress of humanity. That was the transition to a higher form of motion, to the historical form, with its incomparably greater speed and its inexhaustible possibilities for development.

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